# WOMEN AGAINST SLAVERY

Samuel Sillen

# *Women Against Slavery*

By SAMUEL SILLEN

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*For Janet, Tom and Bob*

# Foreword

I have long been interested, as a student of our national heritage, in the story of the women who took a leading and heroic part in the anti-slavery struggles of a hundred years ago. It is one of the inspiring chapters of our history. The following sketches of sixteen women Abolitionists, Negro and white, will perhaps suggest something of the drama and nobility of their fight for freedom against heavy odds.

The story is especially meaningful for us today, when minorities are again being officially persecuted for their advanced social views. As in the days of the Abolitionists, the Bill of Rights is under attack. The defenders of injustice and greed again seek to crush all those who dissent from their inhuman values. In a time when Americans are jailed for their political ideas and associations, it is heartening to see how devoted patriots of the past faced and overcame similar restrictions on their right to think and speak and publish.

They were ostracized and reviled in a campaign of hate conducted in newspapers and legislative halls. But they did not yield. Representing the true interests of the great majority of Americans, they triumphed. Their uphill struggle contributed generously to our proud inheritance as a people.

One of the women Abolitionists, Lydia Maria Child, said: "Posterity will marvel at the hardness of our prejudice on this subject, as we marvel at the learned and conscientious believers in the Salem witchcraft. So easy is it to see the errors of past ages, so difficult to acknowledge our own."

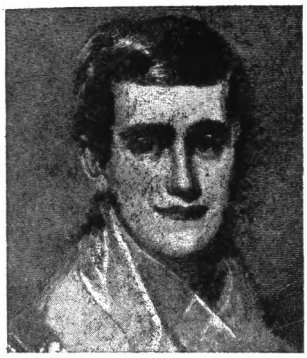
Women were in the center of the long and bitter struggle to end chattel slavery in the United States. Some achieved fame, but most were "unobserved and unapplauded," as Frederick Douglass noted in a warm tribute. And all had to break through the bigotry, not absent in Abolitionist circles

themselves, which confined their "natural sphere" to domestic concerns.

In the fight to free the Negro slave, women gained a deeper conviction of their own rights. They found that the advance of American women, themselves shackled by a society that foredoomed millions of human beings to "inferiority," could not proceed without the liberation of the Negro people. And in a hard school, braving abuse and violence, they learned how to organize for political ends. Unity was forged between white women and their Negro sisters; and at the same time strong solidarity of aim and action was established between the women anti-slavery fighters and the most advanced of the Abolitionist men. The history of the battle for woman's rights is thus inseparable from the movement for the Negro's liberty.

Freedom is a prize more easily yielded than won, as we cannot too often remind ourselves these days. In re-discovering our national past, we are moved to resolve anew that the freedoms so dearly won will not be surrendered to demagogues and witch-hunters.

—Samuel Sillen



# PRUDENCE CRANDALL

A STORMY CONFLICT shook the village of Canterbury, Connecticut, in 1833. Prudence Crandall had enrolled a Negro student, Sarah Harris, in her Boarding and Day School for young ladies. Miss Harris was the daughter of a farmer in the vicinity who was the local agent for William Lloyd Garrison's Abolitionist paper, *The Liberator*. "If she stays we will ruin your school," the village authorities warned Prudence Crandall. "Let it sink, then," she replied, "I shall not turn her out."

Indignant parents withdrew their daughters, but the principal would not retreat. She decided to meet the boycott with still more boldness. "I made up my mind," she said, "that if it were possible I would teach colored girls exclusively."

Miss Crandall sent a letter to Garrison asking what he thought of her plan. First she introduced herself to the editor: she was 27, of Quaker background, educated at the Friends' School in Providence, Rhode Island. In 1831 she had bought a large house in the center of Canterbury where she had set up a flourishing school. And now, she wrote, "I wish to know your opinion respecting changing white scholars for colored ones. . . . I do not dare tell anyone of my

neighbors about the contemplated change in the school, and I beg you, sir, that you will not expose it to anyone."

The schoolteacher was spurred to this courageous move by a young Negro woman in her employ, Mrs. Charles Harris, sister-in-law of the new student. It was Mrs. Harris who introduced Prudence Crandall to *The Liberator,* the great majority of whose subscribers were Negroes. The principal's Abolitionist sympathies were quickly aroused. Though her livelihood was at stake, she welcomed the application from Sarah Harris, who had made a fine record in the district school and was now eager for training to qualify as a teacher among her own people.

Miss Crandall urged Garrison to reply by return mail: "if you consider it possible to obtain 20 or 25 young ladies of color to enter this school for the term of one year at the rate of $25 per quarter, including board, washing, and tuition." Garrison heartily approved the project, and his correspondent came to Boston to map out strategy with him. From Boston she went to Providence, where a Negro woman, Mrs. Hammond, agreed to help get pupils—her own daughter, Ann Eliza Hammond, 17, enrolled. Mrs. Hammond took Prudence to three other Negro families who "seemed to feel much for the education of their children, and I think I shall be able to obtain six scholars from Providence." Encouraged by this support, the teacher took the boat for New York, where she secured more pupils with the aid of a Negro minister, Mr. Miller.

Soon she had twenty students. In *The Liberator* for March 2, 1833, Garrison was able to announce "with a rush of pleasurable emotions" that his paper was carrying "the advertisement of Miss P. Crandall (a white lady) of Canterbury, Conn., for a High School for young colored Ladies and Misses."

Then the storm broke. In one week three public meetings were held in Canterbury to plan suppression of the school. A committee of wealthy townsmen called on Miss Crandall,

assured her they felt a "real regard for the colored people," were perfectly willing they should be educated—but not in Canterbury! One village meeting denounced the school in a resolution that "The Government of the United States, the nation with all its institutions, of right belong to the white men, who now possess them." The persecution was led by Andrew T. Judson, prominent lawyer and politician, who warned that "once open this door, and New England will become the Liberia of America." Charging that "there were powerful conspirators engaged with Miss Crandall in the plot," Judson did not fail to dwell on the school's menace to real estate values. Defenders of Miss Crandall were not permitted to speak at the village meetings. They found "fists doubled in our faces," reported Rev. Samuel J. May, Unitarian pastor of nearby Brooklyn, Connecticut.

Despite all threats, Prudence Crandall opened the school in April. The Negro students stood bravely by her side.

And then followed one of the most heroic—and most shameful—episodes in American history. The storekeepers refused to sell supplies to Miss Crandall ("Not a shop in the village will sell her a morsel of food," as Abolitionist Henry Benson noted). The village doctor would not attend ailing students. The druggist refused to give medicine. On top of such fierce inhumanity, rowdies smashed the school windows, threw manure in the well, and started several fires in the building.

"When we walk out, horns are blown and pistols fired," reported one of the students to *The Liberator*. "In the midst of all this, Miss Crandall is unmoved." Somehow she kept the school going. A friendly Negro in Norwich brought provisions from a grocer in Packerville. Sarah Harris' father daily carted buckets of water from his farm two miles away.

Now the law was invoked by the Canterbury bigots. They arrested some of the students, including Ann Eliza Hammond, under an ancient Pauper and Vagrancy statute of Connecticut which called for whipping on the naked body "not exceeding

ten stripes." Upon hearing this, Rev. May hurried down to Canterbury "to assure Miss Hammond that the persecutors would hardly dare proceed to such an extremity, and strengthen her to bear meekly the punishment, if they should in their madness inflict it; knowing that every blow they should strike her would resound throughout this land, if not over the whole civilized world, and call out an expression of indignation before which Mr. Judson and his associates would quail. But I found her ready for the emergency. . . ."

Not quite daring to lash the students publicly, the village leaders pressed for a new law, which was passed by the State Legislature on May 24, 1833. This "Black Law" of Connecticut forbade the establishment of "any school, academy or literary institution for the instruction or education of colored persons who are not inhabitants of this State; nor instruct or teach in any school, or other literary institution whatsoever in this State; nor harbor or board, for the purpose of attending or being taught . . . *etc.* . . ."

And still Miss Crandall kept her school going. For breaking the "Black Law" she was arrested on June 27 and arraigned. But she was not without help. A vigorous legal defense was organized by Abolitionists like Garrison, May, Arthur Tappan. A newspaper, *The Unionist,* was set up to publicize the case. World opinion was aroused. Interest in Prudence Crandall's cause led to the formation in Connecticut of a Female Anti-Slavery Society.

Most of the press, however, was hostile, and freely spread Prosecutor Judson's scurrilous story that Prudence Crandall's real purpose was to "train young Negro women as brides for New England bachelors."

To dramatize the infamy of this persecution, Prudence Crandall's friends decided, with her agreement, not to put up bail, at least for her first day in prison. As it happened, she was to occupy a cell just vacated by a convict who was executed for murdering his wife. This juxtaposition of a mur-

derer and a Quaker schoolmistress effectively symbolized the hysteria of Canterbury's bigwigs.

When Miss Crandall arrived at the jail, Rev. May said to her:

"If now you hesitate, if you dread the gloomy place so much as to wish to be saved from it, I will give bonds for you even now."

"Oh, no," she promptly replied. "I am only afraid they will not put me into jail. Their evident hesitation and embarrassment show plainly how much they deprecate the effect of this part of their folly; and therefore I am the more anxious that they should be exposed, if not caught in their own wicked devices."

Prudence Crandall spent that night in jail. The next day her friends put up the necessary bond to release her from the murderer's cell. She was twice tried and convicted, but the case against her was finally dropped on a technicality in July, 1834, by the Supreme Court of Errors. Meanwhile the heavy financial burden of all this persecution had made it necessary to close down the school. Soon after her acquittal, Miss Crandall married a Baptist clergyman, Rev. Calvin Philleo, with whom she moved to Illinois.

The Canterbury episode had some interesting sequels. Several of Miss Crandall's students went on to become teachers and active Abolitionists, including Sarah Harris (Mrs. S. H. Fayerweather) and Mrs. May Harris Williams, who was to teach for many years in Louisiana. A less happy sequel was the arrest in 1835 of Dr. Reuben Crandall, the principal's brother. He was seized in Washington, D. C., for "inciting slaves to revolt" by disseminating anti-slavery papers. For eight months he languished in a dark Washington jail before he was brought to trial and found not guilty. Soon after his release he died of illness contracted in the prison, as Whittier bitterly recalled in a poem dedicated to Dr. Crandall. And a third sequel: some fifty years after the shame of Canterbury,

the Connecticut legislature, owing largely to the efforts of Mark Twain, voted Prudence Crandall Philleo a pension.

A contemporary comment on the Crandall affair was written by a Negro Abolitionist, Rev. Nathaniel Paul. He was in London at the time, and he sarcastically assured the English public: "Yes, sir, Britons shall know that there are men in America, and whole towns of them, too, who are not so destitute of true heroism but that they can assail a helpless woman, surround her house by night, break her windows, and drag her to prison, for the treasonable act of teaching colored families to read." This treasonable act earned Prudence Crandall a place of honor in the history of our country.

# LUCRETIA MOTT

On December 4, 1833, some sixty Negro and white delegates from ten states gathered in Philadelphia to form the American Anti-Slavery Society. Invited to this historic assembly as "listeners and spectators" were four women, among them Lucretia Coffin Mott, wife of delegate James Mott. The forty-year-old Quaker woman, calmly knitting in the balcony of Adelphi Hall, looked "singularly beautiful in feature and expression," reported a co-secretary of the convention, the young poet Whittier. And Mrs. Mott quickly proved to be more than a listener and spectator.

The first session was slow in getting started. Some of the delegates, rebuffed in their efforts to get a leading citizen of Philadelphia to make opening remarks, were arguing the advisability of postponing the convention. Mrs. Mott stopped her knitting, rose, and asked for the floor. All eyes turned to the balcony as she addressed the delegates: "Right principles are stronger than names. If our principles are right, why should we be cowards? Why should we wait for those who never have had the courage to maintain the inalienable rights of the slave?" There was a burst of applause. None argued any further for delay. During the proceedings, Mrs. Mott

spoke twice again, and at the close, when somebody cautioned her husband that he might hurt his business if he signed the Declaration of Sentiments and Purposes, she leaned over and urged, "James, put down thy name."

Nobody at this early convention appears to have thought of asking the women to sign, as Garrison and other delegates were to recall with shame. But a start had been made. Lucretia Mott and her friends at once went on to organize the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, of which she was to be president for many years.

At this time Lucretia Mott knew little about "preambles and resolutions and votings," as she said, so "we had to call on James McCrummell, a colored man, to give us aid in this work." McCrummell, a dentist of Philadelphia, was a delegate to the 1833 convention and Garrison's host in the city. He presided over the first sessions of the Female Anti-Slavery Society, and under his tutelage the members embarked on an active campaign. They arranged Abolitionist lectures, aided schools for Negro children, called on the women of Pennsylvania to sign petitions for immediate emancipation. Mrs. Mott made long speaking trips: on one two-month journey with her husband she spoke at seventy meetings, travelled 2400 miles, mostly by stage-coach. And she was denounced in the pro-slavery press as "the modern Borgia, the planner of wars and murders."

A strange epithet for this gentle mother of six children, a woman steeped in the peace-loving tradition of the Society of Friends. Born in 1793 on the island of Nantucket, Massachusetts, Lucretia Coffin came from a Quaker family and was educated at a Friends' Boarding school at Nine Partners, near Poughkeepsie, New York. She taught here for a time, and it was here that she met another teacher, James Mott, whom she married in 1811. Lucretia's father, a ship captain engaged in the China trade, turned to another business and moved the family to Philadelphia. Here, in 1818, Lucretia Mott was made

an "acknowledged minister" of the Society of Friends. She crusaded vigorously for a boycott of slave-produced goods, and her husband gave up his cotton business because it was based on the products of slave labor.

Mrs. Mott supported the liberal principles of Elias Hicks, who was frowned upon by the Orthodox Quakers as "a Tom Paine masquerading as a Quaker." Hicks was a strong opponent of slavery, in the spirit of earlier Quakers like John Woolman and Anthony Benezet. The split in the Society of Friends, which took place in 1828, was a turning point in Mrs. Mott's life. As a Hicksite, she found herself denounced as a "disturber" and an "infidel." Her answer to those of her co-religionists who had commercial ties with the South was: "I care not for charges of verbal infidelity; the infidelity I should dread is to be faithless to the right, to moral principle, to the divine impulses of the soul, to a confidence in the possible realization of the millennium now."

Preaching "Truth for Authority, Not Authority for Truth," she became widely known for her challenge to blind dogmatism. "We need to be shocked; Christendom needs to be shocked," she declared. And she was outraged when she heard clergymen claim that the right of property in man was sanctioned by the Bible. To this "grossest perversion" she counterposed a Scriptural quotation: "Woe unto him that useth his neighbor's services without wages, and giveth him not work." Accused of "lugging in" the slavery question in her meetings, she stated her creed plainly: "The millions of downtrodden slaves in our land being the greatest sufferers, the most oppressed class, I felt bound to plead their cause in season and out of season, to endeavor to put myself in their soul's stead, and to aid all in my power in every right effort for their immediate emancipation."

In season and out she gave leadership to the younger generation of Abolitionists. In 1838 this frail-looking woman, dressed in the sober, starched garb of the Quakers, calmly

faced the pro-slavery mob that burned down Pennsylvania Hall, with the connivance of the mayor of Philadelphia. The newly opened hall, built with funds raised by Abolitionists and other reformers, had just been dedicated to "Free Discussion, Virtue, Liberty, and Independence." Mrs. Mott, together with Angelina Grimké and Maria Weston Chapman, was addressing a session of the Women's Anti-Slavery Convention when the meeting was interrupted by jeering hoodlums and the crash of windows. Lucretia Mott rallied the audience and coolly went on with the business of the meeting. As Emerson said of her, she brought a moral character into "this hurly-burly" that "makes every bully ashamed." Mary Grew, another Philadelphia Abolitionist, wrote: "Self-possessed and unshrinking in the stormiest scenes, a mob howling around the house, assailing its windows with stones, or clamoring within its walls, scattering vitriol among the audience, leaping on the platform, drowning the voices of the speakers in their own mad cries, she held fast her integrity, never compromising in the slightest degree a principle. . . ."

At the Pennsylvania Hall meeting, as in the years to come, Mrs. Mott saw the close connection between the Abolitionist movement and the movement for woman's rights. She firmly opposed the popular contention that it was wrong for women to address audiences composed of both men and women (or "promiscuous audiences," as they were then called). In 1840 she made the long trip to London to attend the World Anti-Slavery Convention, only to find that the benighted credentials committee, led by British clergymen, would not seat any of the women delegates. Her protest was vigorous, and when Elizabeth Cady Stanton returned home from this convention and was asked to describe her greatest experience abroad, she answered: "Lucretia Mott." As an aftermath of the London experience, Mrs. Mott joined Mrs. Stanton in organizing the first woman's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York.

Lucretia and James Mott took a trip through Maryland and

Virginia in 1842, boldly presenting their views in these slave states. On her return, Mrs. Mott stopped in Washington to speak her mind to the slaveholder President Tyler. They argued over Colonization, the President urging the merits of this scheme to transport Negroes to Africa as a "solution" to the problems that concerned Mrs. Mott. Tyler said he liked a recent statement to this effect made by the Friends in Baltimore. Lucretia Mott said that she for one did not: it was calculated to set the slaveholders' conscience at ease. To which the President retorted: "I should like to hand Mr. Calhoun over to you."

After her interview with Tyler and some Congressmen, Mrs. Mott concluded: "Our hopes of success must not rest on those in power, but on the common people, whose servants they are. These hear truth gladly, when free access is obtained to their unprejudiced hearts. I ever have hopes of a meeting made up of such."

The Mott home in Philadelphia was a station on the Underground Railroad. Many a fugitive on the way to Canada found a sanctuary there, including the celebrated Henry "Box" Brown, who was shipped from the South in a large crate nailed together by a friendly white man. John Brown stayed here, too, as did Mrs. Brown after her husband was seized at Harper's Ferry. And from abroad came distinguished visitors like Charles Dickens and the Hungarian revolutionist Louis Kossuth to pay their tribute to Lucretia Mott.

Her home was always a beehive of activity at the time of the annual Anti-Slavery Fair or when there was an Abolitionist convention in town. This "planner of wars and murders" writes to her sister in 1848: ". . . I had forty other things which I accomplished; for we had a large wash, and hurried to get the ironing away before the people flocked in. Five came just before dinner. I prepared mince pies, doing every part myself, even to meat chopping; picked over lots of apples, stewed a quantity, chopped some more, and made apple

pudding; all of which kept me on my feet till almost two o'clock, having to come into the parlor every now and then to receive guests. Now I shall rest. . . ."

But this rest was interrupted, more likely than not, to rush to the trial of Daniel Dangerfield, a fugitive Negro whom Mrs. Mott helped defend, or to help a Negro woman, Jane Johnson, escape in a carriage driven under armed guard.

Frederick Douglass left a memorable picture of this spirited, clear-eyed woman whose moral force was a tower of strength for the movement. Douglass and Mrs. Mott spoke together at a number of meetings in Ohio. The Negro leader wrote: "It was admirable to see her rise up in all her elegance and dignity of womanhood. She arrested attention, dispelled prejudice, commanded the entire respect of the assembled thousands. A slight pause, and all eyes are fixed, and all ears are turned—a deep stillness pervades the audience, and her silvery voice, without effort or vehemence, is distinctly heard, even far beyond the vast multitude. Her truthful words came down upon the audience like great drops of summer rain on parched ground." And they came down year after year, these truthful words, until her death in 1880 when Douglass, speaking for all humanity, uttered the simple and heartfelt words· "Good-bye, dear Lucretia."

# MARIA WESTON CHAPMAN

MARIA WESTON CHAPMAN was one of the twelve enterprising women who in the fall of 1834 organized the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. This pioneer group was called "mad," "fanatical," by press and pulpit; but in a short time none of the members had a house large enough to accommodate a meeting. At one crowded gathering in Bennett Street Church early in 1835, sixty women joined the society. Mrs. Chapman was its driving force. A tall, graceful lady of Pilgrim descent, known as the "pride and charm" of Boston's most cultured circles, she had a talent for getting things done. Relentlessly practical, this energetic lieutenant of William Lloyd Garrison earned a reputation as one of the outstanding administrators in the Abolitionist movement. The famous British author Harriet Martineau thought Maria Chapman "the greatest woman I ever heard or read of."

She was born in 1806 at Weymouth, Massachusetts. At 24 she married Henry Grafton Chapman, a Boston merchant who was himself an Abolitionist leader. It was in their household that Wendell Phillips' future wife, Ann Terry Greene, was raised in the crusading spirit ("My wife," said Phillips, "made an Abolitionist out of me; and she always preceded me

in the adoption of the various causes I have advocated").

Mrs. Chapman was in the thick of events that led to the famous 1835 riot in which Garrison was dragged with a rope through the streets of Boston by the "mob in broadcloth." The Female Anti-Slavery Society had arranged to celebrate its first anniversary on October 14, but they were denied a public hall. The London Abolitionist, George Thompson, was scheduled to speak. Boston's pro-slavery press accused this effective orator of hiding behind "the petticoats of the ladies" and promised that "he will be roughly treated by the emissaries of Judge Lynch." Forced to postpone the meeting, the women decided that they must go on with it the following week, though without their guest speaker, whose life was in peril. "We determined," said Mrs. Chapman, "that no weakness of ours should render less defensible the stand our fathers, husbands, and brothers were maintaining."

The meeting was called for three o'clock in the afternoon of October 21. At 2:10, about twenty-five women, Negro and white, entered the hall, which adjoined Garrison's office at the Anti-Slavery Society. Within ten minutes the staircase was thronged with a noisy mob of disrupters that kept over a hundred other women from going up. On this scene of organized hoodlumism appeared the city's pro-slavery Mayor Theodore Lyman with police reinforcements, not to protect the meeting but to stop it. Mrs. Chapman's graphic account in *Right and Wrong in Boston* follows:

Mayor Lyman rushes in: "Go home, ladies, go home!"

Miss Mary S. Parker (President of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society): "What renders it necessary we should go home?"

Mr. Lyman: "I am the Mayor of the city, and I cannot now explain; but will call upon you this evening."

Miss Parker: "If the ladies will be seated, we will take the sense of the meeting."

Mr. Lyman: "Don't stop, ladies, go home!"

Miss Parker: "Will the ladies listen to a letter addressed to the Society by Francis Jackson, Esq.?"

Mr. Lyman: "Ladies, do you wish to see a scene of bloodshed and confusion? If you do not, go home!"

Mrs. Chapman: "Mr. Lyman, your personal friends are the instigators of this mob; have you ever used your personal influence with them?"

Mr. Lyman: "I know no personal friends; I am merely an official. Indeed, ladies, you must retire. It is dangerous to remain."

Mrs. Chapman: "If this is the last bulwark of freedom, we may as well die here as anywhere."

The women were finally forced to adjourn, and they went down the staircase "amid the manifestations of a revengeful brutality." Mrs. Chapman, deeply concerned about the danger to the Negro women present, whispered to her comrades: "Two and two, to Francis Jackson's, Hollis Street, each with a colored friend." She reported: "When we emerged into the open daylight there went up a roar of rage and contempt, which increased when they saw that we did not intend to separate, but walked in regular procession. They slowly gave way as we came out. As far as we could look either way the crowd extended—evidently of the so-called 'wealthy and respectable'; 'the moral worth'; the 'influence and standing.'"

It was this mob of respectable ruffians that got hold of Garrison and dragged him through the streets. The ladies, undaunted, went on to Hollis Street, but finding Mrs. Jackson very ill, they went back to Mrs. Chapman's house and proceeded calmly to elect their officers for the following year. They discussed business matters—50 cents annual membership; lifetime fee, $5. They made plans to sell needlework for the benefit of the Society. And they reaffirmed their creed: "We treasure in our hearts as sainted, and worthy to be held in everlasting remembrance, the names of those who replied, 'Never heed *us*. We can bring you bread and water, and serve

out ammunition and fill the places of the fallen.' These were the mothers of New England; and in Concord, and Stonington, and Deerfield, and Groton, round many a village hearth, their names are freshly remembered."

Mrs. Chapman's activities in the movement were manifold. When Garrison was ill or abroad, she edited *The Liberator.* For a time she was an editor of *The Anti-Slavery Standard.* Understanding the need of the Abolitionist movement for "the encouragement, consolation and strength afforded by poetry and music," she published a collection of *Songs of the Free* and *Hymns of Christian Freedom,* to which she contributed some of her own verse, which unfortunately is not memorable. Again and again one finds her name listed as the Secretary—that is, the sparkplug—of committees. With Lucretia Mott and Lydia Maria Child she was in the first group of women elected in 1840 to the executive committee of the Anti-Slavery Society. This precipitated a split in the Society, with the opponents of women's participation going on to form a new organization led by Lewis Tappan, who said that "to put a woman on a committee with men is . . . contrary to the usages of civilized society."

One of Mrs. Chapman's major activities was the Anti-Slavery Bazaar held annually in Boston for over twenty years. These fairs were mainly fund-raising functions. They were indispensable for keeping up the publications and organizing work of the Abolitionist movement. Held during the Christmas season, the bazaars sold books, art objects, confections, house furnishings. Sewing circles throughout New England worked the year round to produce needlework for the fairs. Goods came from sympathizers abroad—Mrs. Chapman wrote to her friend Lydia Maria Child in 1841: "Petersburg, Paris, Geneva, Rome, London, Glasgow, all Ireland, the lovely city of the Cape, and the Haitian city of Santiago are all contributors."

In his poem, "Letter from Boston," written in 1846, James Russell Lowell describes the Bazaar:

> *"There was Maria Chapman, too.*
> *With her swift eyes of clear steel-blue,*
> *The coiled-up mainspring of the Fair,*
> *Originating everywhere*
> *The expansive force without a sound*
> *That whirled a hundred wheels around . . .*
> *Who might, with those fair tresses shorn,*
> *The Maid of Orleans casque have worn,*
> *Herself the Joan of our Ark,*
> *For every shaft a shining mark."*

An adjunct to the Bazaar was a yearly gift-book, *Liberty Bell.* This series of literary miscellanies was Mrs. Chapman's idea, and she edited most of the numbers, aided by her sisters Anne Warren Weston and Caroline Weston. The *Liberty Bell* had nearly 200 contributors who included the leading American writers of the time—Whittier, Longfellow, Emerson—along with famous figures from abroad like Lady Byron, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, de Tocqueville, Michelet, Mazzini. The gift-book idea was enormously popular, and soon the Female Anti-Slavery Societies in other cities were producing their own, such as *Autographs for Freedom,* published by Julia Griffiths in Rochester as an aid to Frederick Douglass' paper, *Liberty Chimes* in Providence, *The North Star* in Philadelphia.

Like so many of the white Abolitionist leaders, Maria Chapman was not altogether free of patronizing attitudes toward Negroes in the movement. She was justly rebuked for this, in 1843, by Henry Highland Garnet, a Negro pastor in Troy, New York, following an article in *The Liberator* which insinuated that he was being used as a pawn by anti-Garrisonian forces.

A few years later she drew another well-deserved rebuke from Frederick Douglass. But Maria Chapman apologized on both occasions, and Douglass assured her that "I never for a moment doubted the purity of intention."

Mrs. Chapman, following the death of her husband, went to Europe with her children. She lived abroad from 1848 to 1855 as a representative of the Abolitionist movement, speaking and writing, preparing circulars and tracts, corresponding with sympathizers like Victor Hugo. Upon her return, she was warmly welcomed by her colleagues, and she took up again her multitudinous duties.

"There was something about her that reminded one of a gladiator," recalled her grandson John Jay Chapman. "She deserves a medallion in the historic hall of her generation."

# THE GRIMKE SISTERS

*Angelina Grimké*

THE SLAVEHOLDERS had a special reason for hating Sarah and Angelina Grimké. For these Abolitionist sisters were "renegades" from the very class whose economic system they exposed as "a manufactory of widows and orphans." Their father was a Supreme Court Judge in South Carolina, wealthy, conservative, a pillar of Charleston's exclusive society. In their own plantation home they witnessed the horrors of slavery, and when they launched their passionate appeals to white women, North and South, they spoke with unique effectiveness. The anti-slavery movement was quick to appreciate "Carolina's high-souled daughters," in the words of Whittier's poem, who came North to testify that the enslaved Negro women "are our countrywomen—*they are our sisters,* they have a right to look for sympathy with their sorrows, and effort and prayer for their rescue."

Sarah Grimké was born at Charleston in 1792, her sister Angelina in 1805. Even as a youngster, Sarah rebelled against the indecencies of the system on which her family's wealth was based. She recalled taking "an almost malicious satisfaction on teaching my little waiting-maid at night, when she was supposed to be occupied in combing and brushing my

long locks. The light was out, the keyhole screened, and flat on our stomachs before the fire, with the spelling-book under our eyes, we defied the laws of South Carolina." Her revolt took solid shape when at the age of 27 she accompanied her father to Philadelphia, where they stayed with Quakers. On returning to Charleston's "butterfly life," she reflected over the slaves' trials "until they became like a canker, incessantly gnawing." She decided to leave the South and live in Philadelphia, where she broke with the Episcopalian tradition of her family and joined the Society of Friends.

Angelina, too, was appalled, and in her youthful diary she poured her anguish as she heard people in her circle argue how good life was for the slave. "Yesterday was a day of suffering," she writes in a typical entry. "My soul was exceedingly sorrowful, and out of the depths of it, I cried unto the Lord that He would make a way for me to escape from this land of slavery." She followed Sarah to Philadelphia in 1829 and also joined the Friends.

The younger sister, more positive and self-reliant than Sarah, now took the more advanced Abolitionist position. When she read about the anti-Garrison riot in Boston in 1835, she sent a letter to Garrison expressing admiration for his decision to stand firm. "The ground upon which you stand is holy ground," she wrote; "never, never surrender it." To her surprise this letter appeared in *The Liberator*. The Orthodox Quakers of Philadelphia were outraged. They demanded that Angelina repudiate the letter, but she refused. Instead, she published in 1836 her famous *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South.*

This 36-page pamphlet was a bombshell. Reminding her readers of her background, she said: "I am going to tell you unwelcome truths, but I mean to speak those *truths in love,* and remember Solomon says, 'faithful are the *wounds* of a friend.'" With learning and logic she demolished the main arguments of the apologists for slavery. Placing heavy empha-

sis on the harm that the slavery system did to the white women of the South, and accenting the responsibility of these women to act, she showed what they could do to help "*overthrow* this horrible system of oppression and cruelty, licentiousness and wrong." Angelina ably refuted the slanders against the Abolitionists, and she prophesied that their movement would continue mightily to shake the country "until the polluted temple of slavery shall fall and crumble in ruin." With flaming eloquence she invoked the Old Testament to demand:

"Can you not, my friends, understand the signs of the times; do you not see the sword of retributive justice hanging over the South, or are you still slumbering at your posts?—Are there no Shiprahs, no Puahs among you, who will dare in Christian firmness and Christian meekness, to refuse to obey the *wicked laws* which require *woman to enslave, to degrade and to brutalize woman?* Are there no Miriams, who would rejoice to lead out the captive daughters of the Southern States to liberty and light?"

The slaveholders were wild with rage. Copies of the pamphlet which Angelina mailed to Charleston were publicly burned by the postmaster. The authorities announced that Miss Grimké would be jailed if she dared set foot in her native city. She was forbidden to communicate, by letter or otherwise, with anybody in South Carolina. Clearly, Angelina's blow had struck home, as did Sarah Grimké's *Epistle to the Clergy of the Southern States,* also published in 1836. Soon thereafter, the sisters persuaded their mother to apportion the slaves on the family plantation as their share of the estate, and they at once freed this "property."

Angelina's next pamphlet, in 1837, was her *Appeal to the Women of the Nominally Free States* in which she again struck at the degrading effects of slavery on all women. "Slavery cannot survive discussion," she pointed out, explain-

ing that this accounted for the hue and cry against free speech. Believing ardently in such discussion, Angelina now took another revolutionary step. After much hesitation, she and Sarah began to speak against slavery at public meetings attended by both men and women. In city after city large crowds flocked to hear the courageous sisters in Quaker garb. And now the General Association of the Congregational ministers of Massachusetts, fearing that the pillars of society were being undermined, issued a Pastoral Letter forbidding churches to allow the Grimké sisters and other "unnatural" women to speak from the pulpit. The Pastoral Letter proclaimed:

"The power of woman is in her dependence, flowing from the consciousness of that weakness which God has given her for her protection. . . . If the vine, whose strength and beauty is to lean upon the trellis-work and half conceal its clusters, thinks to assume the independence and the overshadowing nature of the elm, it will not only cease to bear fruit, but will fall in shame and dishonor in the dust. We cannot, therefore, but regret the mistaken conduct of those who encourage females to bear an obtrusive and ostentatious part in measures of reform, and countenance any of that sex who so far forget themselves as to itinerate in the character of public lecturers and teachers. . . ."

To this doctrine Sarah Grimké responded with a new pamphlet vigorously indicting male domination, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman*, in 1838. On the same occasion Whittier wrote his blistering poem, "The Pastoral Letter," while Maria Weston Chapman sarcastically commented in a poem called "The Times That Try Men's Souls":

"Confusion has seized us, and all things go wrong,
The women have leaped from 'their spheres,'
And, instead of fixed stars, shoot as comets along,
And are setting the world by the ears!"

In a letter to her Negro friend, Sarah Douglass of Philadelphia, with whom the Grimké sisters maintained a thirty-year correspondence, Sarah Grimké suggests the terror of the times: "It is so much the fashion to publish anti-slavery movements that I will just mention that our friends in New York think the less said at present about what we are doing the better. Let us move quietly on for a while and the two 'fanatical women,' as the Richmond papers call us, may thro' divine help do a little good." In a separate letter Angelina describes a man in the audience who was taking notes: "I think he was a Southern spy and shall not be at all surprised if he publishes us in some Southern paper."

In 1838 Angelina Grimké married the prominent Abolitionist leader Theodore Weld, whom she had met at an anti-slavery convention in New York, describing him as "this lion of the tribe of abolition." That year of her marriage Angelina addressed the Massachusetts legislature on the slavery question. This unprecedented event was a spectacle "of the greatest moral sublimity I ever witnessed," wrote Lydia Maria Child. "The house was full to overflowing. For a moment a sense of the immense responsibility resting on her seemed almost to overwhelm her. She trembled and grew pale. But this passed quickly, and she went on to speak gloriously." So gloriously, in fact, that some members of the legislature tried to stop her from having a hearing on the next day. They claimed that such a big crowd would be attracted that the galleries were in danger of being broken down. Upon which a Salem member of the legislature ironically proposed that a "committee be appointed to examine the foundations of the State House of Massachusetts, to see whether it will bear another lecture from Miss Grimké."

Angelina's detractors called her Devilina, which only proved her effectiveness. Ill health, however, cut short her activities as an Abolitionist speaker, though this did not keep her from helping Theodore Weld write one of the great anti-

slavery pamphlets, *American Slavery As It Is,* which in 224 pages assembled the revealing testimony of Southern newspapers as well as fugitive slaves. In the years before the Civil War, Angelina and Sarah spent much of their time conducting, with Weld, a co-educational school for Negro and white students in New Jersey. At a women's conference during the war, Angelina Grimké Weld again appeared in public to declare: "I want to be identified with the Negro; until he gets his rights, we shall never have ours."

# SOJOURNER TRUTH

DURING THE 1850's Sojourner Truth held a series of Abolitionist meetings in northern Ohio. At the close of one, a surly white man stormed up to the platform and ranted: "Old woman, do you think that your talk about slavery does any good? Why, I don't care any more for your talk than I do for the bite of a flea." "Perhaps not," responded Sojourner Truth, "but, the Lord willing, I'll keep you scratching." The Lord was more than willing, and this tall, gaunt Negro woman kept the enemies of her people eternally busy up and down the land.

Her testimony was not to be denied. "She talks like one who has not only *heard* of American slavery, but has *seen* and *felt* it," wrote Sallie Holley, who was with her in the Ohio campaign. "As she eloquently exclaimed last evening, 'All the gold of California, all the wealth of this nation, could not restore to me that which the white people have wrested from me.'" The slave-born woman could give witness to the living reality of the system. Had she not herself been flogged by the "kind masters" of her childhood and youth till the blood flowed? "And now," she said, "when I hear them tell of whipping women on the bare flesh it makes *my* flesh crawl, and my very hair rise on my head." Sojourner Truth's passion for

freedom, her strong character and marvellous oratory, deeply stirred the whole Abolitionist movement.

She was born around 1797 on the estate of a Dutch landowner in Hurley, Ulster County, New York. Her father had been pirated from the Gold Coast of Africa, and her mother nursed twelve children, all but two of whom were sold to other plantations. Isabella, as Sojourner Truth was called then, was sold on the auction block when she was nine, and torn from her parents. Able to speak only in a Dutch dialect as a child, she had this added language burden as she was sold among the English-speaking farmers in the area around Kingston, New York. She married a slave, whom we know only as Thomas, and she had five children.

New York State had passed an emancipation law which was to go into effect on July 4, 1827, when Isabella was thirty. But her owner, John Dumont of New Paltz, decided that he was entitled to still another year of her services. Isabella did not share Mr. Dumont's opinion, so one day she took off before dawn with an infant in one arm, some clothes and provisions in the other. She found refuge with a family of Quaker farmers.

But her troubles were far from over. Now her five-year-old son Peter was illegally seized and sold to a slaveholder in Alabama. Isabella fought heroically to regain her boy. She gave no rest to the authorities, who did not conceal their surprise that so much fuss was being made about a Negro child. Finally, after battering away at the courthouse doors in Kingston, Isabella won back Peter. And in that hard battle she began to feel the strength that was in her. "Why," she exclaimed, "I felt *so tall within*—I felt as if the *power of a nation* was with me."

Now free, she took Peter to New York City in 1829 and lived there for several years. Sharing the intense religiosity characteristic of the period, she soon became known for her power to move church groups with prayer and song. She had

a low voice, usually subdued, but capable of thunder, too.

Isabella's experiences in New York were not very happy. "Truly," she thought, "here the rich rob the poor, and the poor rob the poor." So one day in 1843 she collected her few things, said goodbye to the woman for whom she was working, and headed out into the country to preach a new gospel. As she later told Harriet Beecher Stowe: "My name was Isabella; but when I left the house of bondage, I left everything behind. I wasn't going to keep nothing of Egypt on me, and so I went to the Lord and asked him to give me a new name. And the Lord gave Sojourner, because I was to travel up and down the land, showing the people their sins, and being a sign unto them. Afterward I told the Lord I wanted another name, 'cause everybody else had two names; and the Lord gave me Truth, because I was to declare the truth to the people."

And now she declared the truth far and wide, preaching in private homes and at camp-meetings, in New England and in the West. Mostly she devoted herself to battling for her people's freedom. She had a white satin banner on which was inscribed: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." And when she set up her banner on the anti-slavery platform, large crowds thronged to hear this black woman's fiery message. During intermissions, she raised money by selling copies of *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth.* This biography by a white woman writer, Olive Gilbert, was published in 1850 and evoked "renewed efforts for the liberation of all who are pining in bondage on American soil," as Garrison said in his introduction.

During a woman's rights convention at Akron, Ohio, in 1852, Sojourner Truth listened impatiently as an invited male minister intoned the superior talents and privileges of men. Rising from her seat in the audience, she asked the chairlady, Frances D. Gage, for the floor. Half a dozen people on the platform gasped, "Don't let her speak," for they feared, as Mrs. Gage

reported, that the meeting would be denounced as "an Abolition affair." But Sojourner moved solemnly to the front, laid her old white bonnet at her feet, and turned her "great, speaking eyes" to the chairlady, who proceeded to introduce her.

The tumult subsided as Sojourner Truth began. "Well, children," she said, her eyes twinkling, "where there is so much racket there must be something out o' kilter. I think that 'twixt the Negroes of the South and the women at the North all a-talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon." And she continued:

"But what's all this here talking about? That man over there say that women needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever help me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me any best place, and aren't *I* a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have plowed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me—and aren't *I* a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man (when I could get it), and bear the lash as well—and aren't *I* a woman? I have borne five children and seen them most all sold off into slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard—and aren't *I* a woman?"

As to this matter of "superior intellect," she went on amid murmurs of approval, what has that to do with woman's rights or the Negro's rights? And with a flash of irony: "If my cup won't hold but a pint and yourn holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half-measure full?" Then, turning to another male objector: "If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down, all 'lone, these together ought to be able to turn it back and get it right side up again, and now they is asking to do it, the men better let 'em."

Her brilliant oratory won the audience completely, as she concluded modestly: "Bleeged to you for hearing on me, and now ol' Sojourner ha'n't got nothing more to say." To loud

cheers she walked back to her seat in the corner while many rushed to shake her hand. "She had taken us up in her strong arms," reported the grateful Mrs. Gage, "and carried us safely over the slough of difficulty, turning the whole tide in our favor."

For two years she remained in Ohio, going from town to town, working closely with Marius Robinson of Salem, editor of the *Anti-Slavery Bugle.* Then she moved, around 1856, to Battle Creek, Michigan, where she was to make her home. "The wondrous experiences of that most remarkable woman would make a library," testified Abolitionist leader Parker Pillsbury, "if not indeed a literature, could they all be gathered and spread before the world. I was much in her company for several years in the anti-slavery conflict, and have often seen her engaged in what seemed most unequal combat with the defenders of slavery and foes of freedom; but I never saw her when she did not scatter her enemies with dismay and confusion."

Sojourner Truth travelled to Massachusetts with her grandson to see Harriet Beecher Stowe and thank her for *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* Mrs. Stowe later wrote a long account of this visit for the *Atlantic Monthly* in which she gave a memorable image of "The Libyan Sybil." Never had the novelist met anyone who had "more of that silent and subtle power which we call personal presence" than this woman who explained her mission to show the American nation its "sins against my people." Sojourner stayed for several days, enchanted and instructed the Stowe family, telling them her life story and singing songs of the Underground Railroad. "There was both power and sweetness in that great warm soul and that vigorous frame," wrote Mrs. Stowe.

And Sojourner's mission continued through the Civil War. "Years ago," she said, "when I lived in New York City, my occupation was scouring brass door knobs; but now I go about scouring *Copperheads!*" In 1862, on one of her scouring

expeditions, a pro-slavery mob at Angola, Indiana, threatened: "If that n.... Sojourner Truth tries to speak in the town hall, we will burn down the building." "Then I will speak," she said, "upon its ashes." Nearing her seventies, she had lost nothing of her vigor and courage and wisdom.

In the fall of 1864, Sojourner made the long trip from Battle Creek to Washington to visit Mr. Lincoln in the White House. "I thank the Lord," she told the President, "that you were the instrument selected by Him and the people to do it. Strange thing, too, Mr. Lincoln, I never heard tell of you until they commenced talking about you for President." And Mr. Lincoln acknowledged: "Well, I heard of you years and years before I ever thought of being President."

He showed her a Bible given him by the Negro citizens of Baltimore, inscribed with the word *Emancipation*. "What a beautiful book!" cried the former slave. "And to think the colored people have given this to the President of the country; and this is the country which once would not permit these Negroes to learn enough to enable them to read this book!" Sojourner Truth had lived to see a new day dawning, though none knew better than she how much work remained to be done.

# LYDIA MARIA CHILD

IN THE EARLY 1830's, Lydia Maria Child was one of the most popular authors in the country. Her books, ranging from fiction (*Hobomok* and *The Rebels*) to a best-selling cook-book (*The Frugal Housewife*), ran into many editions and were translated abroad. She was the founder and editor of a pioneer among magazines for children, the *Juvenile Miscellany*. "Few female writers, if any, have done more or better things for our literature in the lighter or graver departments," said the influential *North American Review* of that period.

And then, like a thunderbolt, came a new book by Mrs. Child in 1833 entitled *Appeal in Behalf of That Class of Americans Called Africans*. This hard-hitting Abolitionist *Appeal* startled the reading public, North and South. As Whittier wrote half a century later: "It is quite impossible for any one of the present generation to imagine the popular surprise and indignation which the book called forth." Sales of Mrs. Child's other works shot down; Southern bookstores refused to stock them. Circulation of her children's magazine fell off so disastrously that it had to be discontinued. The privileges of the Boston Athenaeum library, whose books Mrs. Child

had used in writing her *Appeal,* were summarily withdrawn.

This sudden shift in fortune came as no great shock to the author. She had anticipated it in the preface to her *Appeal*: "I am fully aware of the unpopularity of the task I have undertaken; but though I *expect* ridicule and censure, I do not *fear* them. A few years hence, the opinion of the world will be a matter in which I have not even the most transient interest; but this book will be abroad on its mission of humanity long after the hand that wrote it is mingling with the dust. Should it be the means of advancing, even one single hour, the inevitable progress of truth and justice, I would not exchange the consciousness for all Rothschild's wealth or Sir Walter's fame."

But the *Appeal* gained new readers, too, reaching "thousands who had given no heed to us before," as Abolitionist Samuel J. May testified. Marshalling her facts in a sober, systematic way, the author challenged the myth of the Negro's "innate inferiority," reviewed the grandeur of his African past, dramatized the dehumanizing influence of slavery on the entire country. Mrs. Child also refuted the "solution" proposed by the colonizationists, who advocated deportation of Negro Americans to Africa. So effective was the *Appeal* that it moved William Ellery Channing, the noted clergyman, to walk from Boston to the author's home in Roxbury to report that he would remain silent no longer on the anti-slavery question.

Mrs. Child was steeped in the Revolutionary tradition. Born at Medford, Massachusetts, in 1802, she came from a family that had settled here in 1636. Her grandfather was a weaver who had fought at Concord in 1775; her father, a baker, shared the strong democratic views of the artisan class. As a youngster Lydia Maria Francis showed her literary bent and something of her independent spirit. Reading Milton's *Paradise Lost* at fifteen, she was excited by the poet's genius—"But don't you think that Milton asserts the superiority of his own

sex in rather too lordly a manner?" she queried her brother. In 1825 she opened a private school in Watertown, Massachusetts. Three years later she married David Lee Child, an Abolitionist lawyer and member of the Massachusetts legislature.

Like Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mrs. Child made her contribution to the Abolitionist cause as a writer rather than as a speaker or organizer. She produced over thirty books and pamphlets, most of them devoted to the anti-slavery cause. The titles are self-explanatory: *The Duty of Disobedience to the Fugitive Slave Law, Antislavery Catechism, The Evils of Slavery and the Cure of Slavery.* And even when Mrs. Child turned to a romantic novel of ancient Greece, *Philothea,* in 1836, she answered those who congratulated her on its success: "For my own sake, I care far less about literary success than I could easily make people believe; but I am glad if this work adds to my reputation, because it will help to increase my influence in the anti-slavery cause."

The quality of her writing and thought is suggested by Mrs. Child's correspondence with her brother Convers Francis, a Unitarian clergyman who became a professor at the Harvard Divinity School. A fascinating drama of ideas unfolds in this exchange between the Abolitionist sister and her more conservative brother. Thus, when Convers writes to her that the people themselves are to blame for many of the evils she hates, Mrs. Childs answers: "What is the root of the difficulty on this great question of abolition? It is not with the farmers, it is not with the mechanics. The majority of their voices would be on the right side if the question were fairly brought before them; and the consciousness that such would be the result creates the earnest desire to stop discussion. No, no! It is not these who are to blame for the persecution suffered by abolitionists. Manufacturers who supply the South, ministers settled at the South, and editors patronized by the South, are the ones who really promote mobs. Withdraw the aristocratic

influence, and I should be perfectly easy to trust the cause to the good feeling of the people."

When Convers suggests that his sister be more prudent, she replies: "You ask me to be prudent, and I will be so, so far as is consistent with a sense of duty; but this will not be what the world calls prudent. . . . I have examined the history of the slave too thoroughly, and felt his wrongs too deeply, to be prudent in the worldly sense of the term." And she is sustained by the knowledge that "Posterity will marvel at the hardness of our prejudice on this subject, as we marvel at the learned and conscientious believers in the Salem witchcraft. So easy is it to see the errors of past ages, so difficult to acknowledge our own."

In 1841 Mrs. Child moved to New York to become editor of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard,* a weekly newspaper published by the Anti-Slavery Society. An announcement in the paper greeting her noted that "Woman has spoken and written in the anti-slavery service, but this is, we believe, her first assumption of the editorial chair in this great movement." In New York, the editor stayed with the family of Isaac T. Hopper, the militant Abolitionist Quaker, whose life she was later to write. Editing in New York, a center of pro-slavery agitation, proved to be even more arduous than she had supposed. "The type is fine," she complained, "and that large sheet swallows an incredible amount of matter. . . . An anti-slavery editor is a sort of black sheep among the fraternity, and I have no courtesies from the booksellers."

But the paper flourished under her leadership. Its literary quality was notably higher than that of most Abolitionist papers, and Mrs. Child featured the poetry of Whittier, Bryant, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Hood. She wrote a series of "Letters from New York," later published as a book, which drew a vivid picture of the city where "Wealth dozes on damask couches, thrice piled, while Poverty camps in the streets. . . . In Wall Street and elsewhere, Mammon, as usual, coolly cal-

culates his chance of extracting a penny from war, pestilence and famine." Even though she knew "much better who leads the orchestras than who governs the State," Mrs. Child provoked the fury of the Democratic papers. To those reformers who championed what they called individual action as against work through organizations, she replied: ". . . but, the simple fact is, anti-slavery societies are the steam, and they are the passengers in the cars. They may not like the puffing and blowing, the cinders and the jolting; but the powerful agency carries them onward."

Mrs. Child's militancy increased as the Civil War approached. Once she found herself "collaring and pulling away a man who was shaking his fist in Mr. Phillips' face at a Music Hall mob," and great was her surprise when she saw the man tumbling down. In 1856 she vigorously supported the presidential candidacy of John C. Fremont. "I would almost lay down my life to have him elected," she wrote to a woman friend. "There never has been such a crisis since we were a nation. If the slave-power is checked now, it will never regain its strength. If it is not checked, civil war is inevitable; and, with all my horror of bloodshed, I could be better resigned to that great calamity than to endure the tyranny that has so long trampled on us."

It is not surprising, then, to find Mrs. Child up in arms when John Brown was seized at Harper's Ferry. She wrote Brown a letter asking permission to come down to nurse the ailing prisoner. She packed her trunk and waited, but Brown replied that he thought it unwise for her to come to Virginia. She also got a letter from Governor Wise of Virginia, rebuking her for sympathizing with his prisoner. Mrs. Child's answer to Governor Wise appeared in the New York *Tribune*, whereupon she was bitterly attacked by Mrs. James M. Mason, wife of the Virginia Senator who had drafted the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850. "Do you read your Bible, Mrs. Child?" asked the indignant Southern lady. "If you do, read there,

'Woe unto you hypocrites,' and take to yourself, with twofold damnation, that terrible sentence. . . . *You* would soothe with sisterly and motherly care the hoary-headed murderer of Harper's Ferry! . . . no Southerner ought, after your letter to Governor Wise and to Brown, to read a line of your composition, or to touch a magazine which bears your name in its list of contributors; and in this we hope for the 'sympathy' at least of those at the North who deserve the name of woman."

This gave Mrs. Child the richest opportunity of her polemical career, and she was quick to seize it. Her reply was a masterpiece. "It would be extremely difficult," she wrote, "to find any woman in our villages who does *not* sew for the poor, and watch with the sick, whenever occasion requires. . . . I have never known an instance where the 'pangs of maternity' did not meet with requisite assistance, and here at the North, after we have helped the mothers, *we do not sell the babies.*" With biting irony, with a kind of calm scorn, Mrs. Child exposed the mockery of the pro-slavery position. The entire correspondence was published as a pamphlet in 1860. And it sold 300,000 copies! Few Abolitionist pamphlets had the concentrated impact of this one on the eve of the war.

Lydia Maria Child once thanked Wendell Phillips for being "a wakeful sentinel on the watch-tower, ever to warn a drowsy nation against selfish, timid politicians, and dawdling legislators, who manifest no trust in God or the people." She was always herself such a sentinel.

# HARRIET TUBMAN

HER PEOPLE CALLED her "Moses," for she delivered hundreds out of Egypt to the promised land of freedom. John Brown called her "General Tubman," for she could command an army "as successfully as she had led her small parties of fugitives." To many she was a nameless legend, for the slaveholders had put a price of $40,000 on her head and identification would mean instant death. But all who truly knew this slave-born woman and her amazing exploits could agree with the white Abolitionist leader, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who called her "the greatest heroine of the age."

"There are two things I've got a right to," Harriet Tubman said, "and these are death or liberty. One or the other I mean to have." She won liberty—fought for it with towering courage, tenacity, resourcefulness, and won it not for herself alone. It was her proud claim that she never lost one of her passengers on the Underground Railroad. Not once did she fail or falter in her nineteen daring raids into the armed camp of the oppressor.

Her own childhood was a nightmare of gruelling work and merciless flogging. Born in 1820, in a windowless plantation shack at Bucktown, Maryland, she was the daughter of Ben-

jamin Ross and Harriet Green. As a youngster, burdened in the field with heavy man's work, her soul rebelled against the bondage of her people: "I had seen their tears and sighs, and I had heard their groans, and I would give every drop of blood in my veins to free them." She was only fifteen when she defied an overseer who ordered her to help tie up a slave whom he wanted to whip for attempting to flee. Instead, Harriet helped the Negro man escape. The overseer hurled a two-pound iron weight at her head, and the nearly fatal blow, which deeply scarred her skull, left Harriet Tubman the victim for life of sleeping seizures due to pressure on the brain.

Her plans to escape slowly matured. In 1844 Harriet married John Tubman, a free Negro. In 1849, learning that she was to be sold to the deep South, Harriet Tubman set off to follow the North Star, and with invincible courage she persisted through the cold nights of unknown regions until she crossed into free territory. "When I found I had crossed that line," she later said, "I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person. There was such a glory over everything. The sun came like gold through the trees, and I felt like I was in Heaven."

Penniless, unschooled, "a stranger in a strange land," as she said, Harriet Tubman found jobs as a domestic worker in hotels in Philadelphia. Here she met the Negro Abolitionist William Still, who led the Underground Railroad in the area, and it was not long before she made her first "visit," in December, 1850, to Maryland, returning with a sister and two children. In a few months she brought back a brother and two other men. Again and again, nineteen times in all, Harriet Tubman journeyed South and came back with large parties of fugitives, including her father and mother, whom she conducted all the way to Canada (for the Northern States were no longer a safe refuge after passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850).

The perils of this long passage are beyond description. The

South bristled with armed guards hired to protect the slaveholders' "property." Posters advertised handsome rewards for the capture of escaping slaves and their abettors. There were laws forbidding Negroes to leave by boat or railroad without being "weighed, measured, and then given a bond signed by persons well-known locally." With bloodhounds and bullets the slaveholders pursued the fugitive. An enormous investment was at stake, indeed the whole basis of the plantation economy. Scores of thousands were brought to freedom on the Underground Railroad. During its existence thousands of Negro and white men and women took part in this hazardous work.

Of all the bold conductors, Harriet Tubman was the most sure-footed. To outwit the enemy, she had to plan her raids like a military campaign, employing the tactics of guerrilla warfare, the elements of surprise and speedy withdrawal. Not only courage was required, but ingenuity, a mastery of terrain, a deep understanding of psychology. "Of course, Harriet was supreme," said William Still, with an "adventurous spirit and utter disregard of consequences. Her like it is probable was never known before or since."

The epic of this Negro woman includes many stories of fabulous heroism. Armed with a revolver, she defended her band of fugitives against attack in forest or swamp. She saw to it that posters advertising the runaway were pulled down within minutes after they were tacked up. To baffle the pursuer, she would sometimes place her charges on a train heading South, only to pick them up again at another point. She carried paregoric with her to quiet the baby's cry that might mean betrayal. With one of her parties she was in danger of being caught, so she left the highway and bade her followers cross a stream. The incident was described by Thomas Garrett, white Abolitionist leader of Wilmington, Delaware: "She went in, the water came up to her armpits; the men refused to follow till they saw her safe on the opposite shore. Then they

followed, and if I mistake not she had soon to wade a second stream; soon after which she came to a cabin of colored people, who took them all in, put them to bed, and dried their clothes, ready to proceed next night on their journey. Harriet had run out of money, and gave them some of her underclothing to pay for their kindness. When she called on me two days after she was so hoarse she could hardly speak. . . ."

Harriet Tubman used the songs of her people as signals. There were songs that announced imminent departure:

*"When that there old chariot comes,*
*I'm going to leave you;*
*I'm bound for the promised land,*
*I'm going to leave you."*

Some spirituals, sung in agitated tempo, warned of danger:

*"Moses, go down in Egypt,*
*Tell old Pharoah, let me go;*
*Hadn't been for Adam's fall,*
*Shouldn't have to have died at all."*

And there were songs like "Follow the Drinking Gourd" that pointed the route to freedom.

Harriet Tubman's work brought her in close contact with the leading Abolitionists, and it was natural that Frederick Douglass, and Gerrit Smith should recommend her to John Brown in 1858 as the person best able to help him carry through his plans for liberation in the South. Brown came to see her in St. Catherines, Canada, which was the center of Harriet Tubman's operations for many years, though she made her permanent home in Auburn, New York. At this historic meeting, she agreed to recruit Negro freedmen for Brown's group, and she provided him with precious first-hand information about the routes he was to follow, the allies he might

count on. It was on this occasion that John Brown exclaimed: "The first I see is General Tubman, the second is General Tubman and the third is General Tubman." Brown also discussed plans with his "General" for the holding of the Chatham Convention in Canada, at which recruits for his band would gather. Harriet Tubman planned to be with Brown on his expedition, but she was stricken with illness, and by the time she reached New York, Brown and his men had been captured. As Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois notes in his *John Brown*: "Only sickness, brought on by her toil and exposure, prevented Harriet from being present at Harper's Ferry."

She knew that Brown's death was not an end but a beginning. "They may say, 'Peace, Peace!' as much as they like," she said; "I know there's going to be war!" And when the war was begun by the executioners of John Brown, Harriet Tubman proved again to be "the greatest heroine of the age." Putting her knowledge to good stead, she now served as nurse, scout and spy for the Union Army. When Port Royal, South Carolina, fell to the Union, she volunteered to go down and work among her newly freed people on the Sea Islands. Serving with the General Staff's Intelligence Service, she was able to provide invaluable information on troop locations, terrain, methods of freeing slaves on the big plantations. She led raiding parties behind the enemy lines. As the Boston *Commonwealth* reported in 1863: "Col. Montgomery and his gallant band of 300 black soldiers, under the guidance of a black woman, dashed into the enemy's country, struck a bold and effective blow, destroying millions of dollars worth of commissary stores, cotton and lordly dwellings, and striking terror into the heart of rebeldom, brought off near 800 slaves and thousands of dollars worth of property, without losing a man or receiving a scratch. It was a glorious consummation."

A glorious consummation indeed as she helped Negro women and children escape on "Lincoln's gunboats come to set them free." And she recalled glorious episodes: "One

woman brought two pigs, a white and a black one; we took them all on board; named the white pig Beauregard (Southern general), and the black pig Jeff Davis (President of the Confederacy)." And: "Don't you think we colored people are entitled to some of the credit for that exploit, under the lead of the brave Colonel Montgomery? We weakened the rebels somewhat on the Combahee River, by taking and bringing away seven hundred and fifty-six of their most valuable live stock, known up in your region as 'contrabands,' and this, too, without the loss of a single life on our part, though we had good reason to believe that a number of rebels bit the dust. Of those seven hundred and fifty-six contrabands, nearly or quite all the able-bodied men have joined the colored regiments here."

Harriet Tubman was with the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts, the colored regiment under Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, which stormed Fort Wagner in July, 1863. The Negro troops showed their mettle in that withering fire which Harriet Tubman so eloquently described: "And then we saw the lightning, and that was the guns; and then we heard the thunder, and that was the big guns; and then we heard the rain falling; and when we came to get in the crops, it was dead men that we reaped."

Her noble battle for liberation did not cease until her death at Auburn, New York, in 1913 at the age of ninety-three. This great woman spent her last years in poverty: "You wouldn't think," she said, "that after I served the flag so faithfully I should come to want in its folds." But a grateful people will always remember the words of Frederick Douglass, written with characteristic generosity and perception: "Most that I have done and suffered in the service of our cause has been in public, and I have received much encouragement at every step of the way. You on the other hand have labored in a private way. I have wrought in the day—you in the night. I have had the applause of the crowd and the satisfaction that

comes of being approved by the multitude, while the most that you have done has been witnessed by a few trembling, scarred and foot-sore bondmen and women, whom you have led out of the house of bondage, and whose heartfelt 'God Bless you' has been your only reward. The midnight sky and the silent stars have been the witnesses of your devotion to freedom and of your heroism. Excepting John Brown—of sacred memory—I know of no one who has willingly encountered more perils and hardships to serve our enslaved people than you have. Much that you have done would seem improbable to those who do not know you as I know you."

# LUCY STONE

On a summer day in 1837, Lucy Stone was sitting with her cousin in the women's gallery of the Congregational Church in North Brookfield, Massachusetts. Her fury blazed as she listened to the minister reading the Pastoral Letter that promised "degeneracy and ruin" for women like Angelina and Sarah Grimké brazen enough to speak in public against slavery. "My cousin," remembered Lucy, "said that her side was black and blue with the indignant nudges of my elbow at each aggravating sentence." She was nineteen then, a short, round-faced schoolteacher in a neat calico frock. Almost meek in appearance, she was really "as unshrinking and self-possessed as a loaded cannon," said Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the Abolitionist minister who was to officiate at her marriage.

Born on a farm near Brookfield, Massachusetts, in 1818, she came of Revolutionary stock, and her grandfather had been a leader in Shays' Rebellion. Her father, a tanner by trade, expected his good wife to obey the Biblical injunction: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Lucy, the eighth of nine children, early resented this creed. To buy her own books she worked hard as a youngster, weaving, sewing, shoe-making; and though her father made

it plain that she was straying beyond woman's natural sphere, she kept up her studies and started to teach in the district schools at $1 a week, "boarding around."

In her teens she joined the Congregational church of her village. There were stormy debates when Deacon Henshaw was expelled for anti-slavery activities. Lucy Stone, unmindful of the fact that women could not vote at church meetings, held up her hand to oppose the expulsion. She was scornfully reminded by the minister that this was not her privilege. Six votes were taken. Her hand shot up six times.

Lucy's resolution to "call no man master" was fortified by her reading of Sarah Grimké's pamphlet on women's rights. She began to read other works by Abolitionists, and at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, where she spent a few months as a student, she got into trouble by insisting on leaving copies of Mr. Garrison's *Liberator* in the reading room. The principal, Mary Lyon, called her in and cautioned: "You must remember that the slavery question is a very grave question and one upon which the best people are divided."

Her mind was not divided. Nine years she taught in district schools for the miserable pittance paid women instructors, until she at last saved enough money to enter Oberlin College in 1843. She was attracted to the Ohio college because it was the first in America to admit men and women, Negro and white. "Colored gentlemen and ladies sit at the same table with us," the delighted student wrote home, "and there appears to be no difference." She hung a picture of Garrison in her room. To meet expenses she washed dishes and swept the Ladies' Boarding Hall for three cents an hour.

At Oberlin, a station on the Underground Railroad, Lucy Stone taught fugitive slaves to read and write. But the college had its own orthodoxies: when Lucy and several other young women organized a debating society, they had to meet secretly in the home of one of her Negro pupils. And she was sternly reprimanded by the Ladies' Board of the college when

she accepted an invitation from the Negroes of the community to speak at their celebration of the anniversary of West Indian emancipation. This "very superior young woman" with "a soul as free as the air," wrote Garrison to his wife from Oberlin, where he and Douglass spoke in 1847, "has caused no small uneasiness to the spirit of sectarianism in the Institution."

She was determined to be a public lecturer, pleading "not for the slave only but for suffering humanity everywhere." And then a letter arrived from Abby Kelley Foster, the "Irish Quaker" Abolitionist, saying that Maria Weston Chapman and Mrs. Charles Follen wanted her to accept a job as an agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society upon her graduation in 1847. As a speaker for this society, beginning in the summer of 1848, Lucy Stone soon was well known for her fervor and persuasiveness. One admiring reporter was moved to write that "Boobers in breeches, simpering flirts and all grannies of both sexes may sneer, be shocked and look wise as owls," but Lucy Stone proved the day was not far off when a thoroughly educated woman would no longer be stared at like a lion or elephant.

Tirelessly she rode in an open wagon from village to village. She would tack up her own posters, hire speaking halls, ring doorbells to announce the anti-slavery meeting. Hoodlums often greeted her with spitballs and pepper. Once the nozzle of a hose was put through a window behind her, she was drenched, but she put on a shawl and went on with the meeting. At East Bridgewater, Connecticut, a gallant gentleman stunned her with a prayer-book that he hurled across the hall.

Yet often she would convert the mockers and sell them subscriptions to the *Anti-Slavery Standard.* From state to state she went with her discomforting message that "We here in Boston, here in New England, and everywhere north of Mason and Dixon's line" share responsibility for the "sin of slavery."

The altars of the Church, she said, stood in a sea of blood and tears. And she drove home the fact that while slavery was being abolished in the colonies of despotic European countries, here it was buttressed by the government. But she took the unsound Garrisonian position that slavery could be abolished only outside the government; the Constitution itself was an evil pact with slavery.

Her meetings were packed. A paper in Providence, Rhode Island, reported: "Amity Hall was crowded on Sunday to hear this gifted and eloquent woman plead the cause of the Southern bondman. Hundreds went away disappointed, for at an early hour every seat was filled and every standing-place occupied. Forenoon and afternoon, on the hottest Sabbath of the season, her matchless eloquence kept that compact assembly riveted in their places."

As she won people over to the Abolitionist cause, attacks on her multiplied. She was expelled in 1851 from the West Brookfield Church for engaging in "a course of life evidently inconsistent with her covenant engagements to this church." She became a butt of slander when she combined her Abolitionist agitation with her crusade for woman's rights. One Indiana journal invented the legend that after a lecture she was found in a bar-room smoking a cigar and "swearing like a trooper." The Springfield *Republican* warned: "You she-hyena, don't you come here." The New York *Herald,* under James Gordon Bennett, snickered: "How funny it would sound in the newspapers that Lucy Stone, pleading a cause, took suddenly ill in the pains of parturition and perhaps gave birth to a fine bouncing boy in court!" And the Boston *Post* chivalrously versified:

*"A name like Curtius' shall be his,*
*On fame's loud trumpet blown,*
*Who with a wedding kiss shuts up*
*The mouth of Lucy Stone!"*

Lucy met her husband, Henry B. Blackwell, during a lecture trip to Cincinnati, where he was treasurer of the local Anti-Slavery Society. Blackwell was the brother of Elizabeth Blackwell, who in 1849 had been the first woman to receive a medical degree in America. In Cincinnati, Blackwell nearly ruined his hardware business, but won Lucy's heart, when he led a celebrated fight to rescue a Negro child from a slaveholder taking her on a trip North. Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell were married in 1855. They published then the famous protest against the marriage laws which in those days robbed the wife of every legal right. As a gesture against these barbaric laws, Lucy Stone retained her own name.

The woman's rights movement claimed more and more of her interest and time, but she was persuaded to devote her week-end lectures to Abolitionism while she spoke the rest of the week on the subject that was becoming her main interest. Actually the two movements were closely related, despite the tendencies that developed among some partisans to set one off against the other. At the close of Anti-Slavery Conventions, those interested in Woman's Rights would continue to meet to discuss this question. As Lucy Stone wrote, "The anti-slavery people were full of their own work, but Mr. Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Gerrit Smith, Henry C. Wright, and most of the abolitionists who were on the side of Mr. Garrison, were in favor of rights for women." It was at the close of an Anti-Slavery Convention in Boston, in the spring of 1850, that the first national follow-up to the Seneca Falls woman's rights meeting of 1848 was organized. Lucy Stone's name headed the call. Emerson was a signer. It was held later that year in Worcester, Massachusetts, and its speakers included Frederick Douglass as well as Lucy Stone, Wendell Phillips as well as Sojourner Truth, William Lloyd Garrison as well as Ernestine L. Rose.

When Lucy Stone lived in Cincinnati she made trips to Kentucky and Missouri, where she studied slavery at first

hand. She went to the prison that held Margaret Garner, the fugitive slave who had been trapped by her pursuers near Cincinnati as she was fleeing with her three children. Mrs. Garner had said, "I will go singing to the gallows rather than be returned to slavery," and she had seared the conscience of the country by killing her own daughter rather than see the child brought back to suffer her own terrible fate. Such stories of tragedy and heroism, underlining the human truths of slavery, were vividly used by Lucy Stone in her speeches. It was not rhetoric but reality that fired her talk to an 1856 anti-slavery gathering in Cincinnati: "The mothers of the Revolution gave their linen for cartridges and armed their sons for war. If we are the daughters of such women, let us show it by our deeds and devotion to the anti-slavery cause."

# SUSAN B. ANTHONY

SUSAN B. ANTHONY'S family had been living in Rochester, New York, for two years when Frederick Douglass came to that city to launch his paper, *The North Star*, near the end of 1847. The Anthony farmhouse on the city's outskirts was a favorite meeting-place of the local Abolitionists. On Sundays a score of visitors would gather round the dinner table, and often the atmosphere seemed that of a convention. Douglass and his family would regularly come out by wagon to spend the day. And it was here that Susan, then a schoolteacher of 27, was introduced by her father to the Negro leader with whom she was to appear on so many platforms.

In Rochester, Douglass could count on the support of one of the most effective Female Anti-Slavery Societies in the country. The Rochester group, formed in 1835, included such outstanding Abolitionists as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, Sallie Holley, Amy Post, and Mrs. Samuel D. Porter. Miss Anthony was to become a leader of this militant contingent.

Born at Adams, Massachusetts in 1820, she was brought up as a Quaker. Her father, a manufacturer, was an ardent anti-slavery man, and unlike Elizabeth Cady's stern parent he

encouraged his daughter's search for independence. Susan was 17 when she began to teach at a dollar a week and board. At 19 she went to New Rochelle to teach in a boarding school, and her youthful diary vividly describes her downstate trip on the Hudson River boat, where she heard some Louisiana slaveholders boast the benefits of slavery as she listened in unbelieving horror.

From New Rochelle, whose anti-Negro attitudes appalled her, she wrote home: "Since school today I have had the unspeakable satisfaction of visiting four colored people and drinking tea with them. Their name is Turpin, and Theodore Wright of New York is their stepfather. To show this kind of people respect in this heathen land affords me a double pleasure."

Susan balked at the entreaties of her brother-in-law to be "prudent" in this regard. Such prudence was no virtue in her eyes. She went to New York to attend a street meeting addressed by a Quaker woman, Rachel Barker, and wrote: "I guess if you could hear her you would believe in a woman's preaching. What an absurd notion that women have not intellectual and moral faculties sufficient for anything but domestic concerns."

Thus, before she was twenty, Susan B. Anthony was reaching decisions that were soon to result in her becoming a dynamic leader in the inter-related fight against both slavery and the unequal treatment of women. She was teaching at Canajoharie, New York, when she learned that her father, mother and sister Mary attended the first woman's rights convention of 1848 at Seneca Falls, where they signed the sensational declaration of equal rights. She herself was growing restless with her confining duties in the classroom. At thirty she asked herself: "What service can I render humanity; what can I do to help right the wrong of society?"

She gave up teaching and began to work in the temperance movement. Then, in the winter of 1851, she became ac-

quainted with two of the most devoted Abolitionists, Stephen and Abby Kelley Foster, accompanied them on a lecture tour, and decided to enter actively into the anti-slavery movement. The following year she met two other Abolitionists who were to become her closest co-workers in the woman's rights struggle. The group is described by their friend Ida Harper: "Miss Anthony, a quiet, dignified Quaker girl; Mrs. Stanton, a plump, jolly, youthful matron, scarcely five feet high; and Lucy Stone, a petite, soft-voiced young woman who seemed better fitted for caresses than for the hard buffetings of the world."

In those times "that try women's souls," as she wrote in a letter, Susan Anthony was soon driving herself hard. At first she confided a lack of self-confidence to her diary. "I spoke for an hour, but my heart fails me," she lamented. "Can it be that my stammering tongue ever will be loosed? I am more and more dissatisfied with my efforts." But she gained in skill, and it was not long before she was recognized as one of the most effective anti-slavery organizers in the country.

She was placed in charge of the whole New York campaign of the Anti-Slavery Society in 1857. It was a hard year, a year of financial panic, the first year of Buchanan's pro-slavery Administration. Miss Anthony planned meetings, marked out routes, kept three companies of speakers going, including the Fosters, Parker Pillsbury, the Negro Abolitionist Charles Lenox Remond and his sister Sarah Remond. And she was unsparing of herself and everybody else. "What a task-mistress our general agent is proving herself," complained Pillsbury. "I expect as soon as women get command, an end will have come to all our peace. We shall yet have societies for the protection of men's rights, in the cause of which many of us will have to be martyrs."

Paid $10 a week for her services as general agent, she was everlastingly in debt. She could not afford a new wardrobe: "A double-faced merino, which I bought at Canajoharie ten

years ago, I have had colored dark green and a skirt made of it. I bought some green cloth to match for a basque, and it makes a handsome suit. With my Siberian squirrel cape I shall be very comfortable."

Leading the Garrisonian core in this campaign under the banner of "No Union With Slaveholders," she found herself clashing with hostile audiences in many places. A bitter entry in her diary after one meeting reads: "All rich farmers, living in princely style, but no moral backbone." This was the era when the Syracuse *Star* was lampooning the "brawling women" and the New York *Herald* under James Gordon Bennett was intoning: "How did woman first become subject to man, as she now is all over the world? By her nature, her sex, just as the Negro is and always will be to the end of time inferior to the white race and, therefore, doomed to subjection; but she is happier than she would be in any other condition, just because it is the law of her nature." Such editorials were behind the missiles thrown at speakers like Susan Anthony.

Some of the physical hardships she could take with better humor. The anti-slavery lecturers, to cut down expenses, always accepted private hospitality on their tours, and "O, the crimes that are committed in the kitchens of this land!" Some friends of the movement were cranks on the food question. After endless meals of apples, nuts and coarse bran, from which a lot of the men speakers would take ignominious flight, Susan would start back home hungry for a porterhouse and a pot of coffee. "How happy I am," she wrote, "to lay my head on my own home pillow once more after a long four months, scarcely stopping a second night under one roof."

But if her brothers Merritt and Daniel could endure the rigors of Kansas and the Border Ruffians—Susan's brothers served with John Brown in the raid on Ossawatomie—she could carry on. And she struck back furiously at the bigots, as in this biting passage from one of her speeches: "But if

you emancipate the slaves, what will you do with them? What will the black man do with himself, is the question for him to answer. I am yet to learn that the Saxon man is the great reservoir of human rights to be doled out at his discretion to the nations of the earth. Do with the Negroes? What arrogance it is to put the question! What shall we do with a race of men and women who have fed, clothed, and supported both themselves and their oppressors for centuries!"

While her friend Mrs. Stanton was "pacing up and down these two chambers of mine like a caged lioness, longing to bring nursing and housekeeping cares to a close," Miss Anthony continued to pour her energies into the struggle. The Rochester Abolitionists turned to her for leadership at the time that John Brown and his men were seized at Harper's Ferry. It was tough going. As she noted in her diary, "Not one man of prominence in religion or politics will publicly identify himself with the John Brown meeting." But arrange it she did for the evening of December 2, 1859, the date of Brown's execution. She went from door to door selling tickets. She presided over the meeting. She saw to it that the receipts were sent to John Brown's family.

And all of this hard schooling in the struggle for the liberation of the Negro slave gave power and courage to Susan B. Anthony's unceasing crusade for the emancipation of women, Negro and white.

# ELIZABETH CADY STANTON

GERRIT SMITH'S spacious home in Peterboro, upstate New York, was a meeting place for Abolitionist leaders and a safe point for fugitive slaves following the North Star to Canada. It was at Peterboro that Elizabeth Cady, Smith's young cousin, met her future husband Henry B. Stanton. And it was here that she had been converted, as a young girl, to Abolitionism.

One day Elizabeth and her sisters were taken by cousin Gerrit to a room on the top floor where they were introduced to a young Negro woman of about eighteen. She had just escaped from a slaveholder who was visiting in Syracuse, and she was to start for the border that evening. "Harriet," Smith said to her, "I have brought all my young cousins to see you. I want you to make good Abolitionists of them by telling them the history of your life." For two hours the Cady girls listened to Harriet's story, how she was torn from her family and sold in a New Orleans market when she was only fourteen. "And when Cousin Gerrit returned to summon us away," Elizabeth was to recall, "we needed no further education to make us earnest Abolitionists."

This was a pivotal experience for the daughter of wealthy, conservative Judge Cady, who frowned on Gerrit Smith's radical ideas. Elizabeth's family was rigidly Puritanical, and had all the rules been obeyed, "we might as well have been embalmed as mummies, for all the pleasure and freedom we should have had in our childhood." Born at Johnstown, New York, in 1815, Elizabeth Cady was brought up on gloomy sermons about predestination and eternal damnation. Being a girl did not help matters. There were five sisters, and when their only brother died soon after graduating from Union College, the grief-stricken father told Elizabeth, then eleven: "Oh, my daughter, would that you were a boy!"

Elizabeth resolved to do what only a boy was supposed to do in a proper middle-class family of the time: she studied Greek and mathematics, learned to ride a horse, and won high prizes when at fifteen she graduated from the village academy, the only girl in the class. After two years at Mrs. Willard's fashionable Seminary in Troy, New York, Elizabeth Cady spent considerable time in her father's law office, where she found herself in a perpetual squabble with the law students over the rights of women. Deeply moved by the problems of the women who came to the office for advice, she began to study law.

When Elizabeth became engaged to Henry B. Stanton, himself a lawyer, in 1839, "Cousin Gerrit warned me, in deep, solemn tones, while strongly eulogizing my lover, that my father would never consent to my marriage with an Abolitionist." Her father was indeed furious. He painted a horrible future. He read his daughter a "dissertation on domestic relations from a financial viewpoint." But the marriage did take place, in 1840, the only difficulty being to persuade the minister to leave the word "obey" out of the ceremony. Despite Judge Cady's prophecies, Elizabeth Cady and Henry Stanton were to live happily together for nearly half a century, with their seven children—six of them boys.

Their honeymoon was a trip to London, where Stanton was to serve as a delegate to the World's Anti-Slavery Convention. A fellow-passenger on the voyage over was James G. Birney, Liberty Party candidate for the presidency that year. Birney shared Elizabeth's anti-slavery views, but he was critical of her unwomanly behavior: "I heard you call your husband 'Henry' in the presence of strangers, which is not permissible in polite society. You should always say 'Mr. Stanton.'"

It was a foretaste of what was in store for the Abolitionist women who had been elected as delegates to the London Congress. Birney supported the credentials committee in refusing to seat Lucretia Mott, Ann Green Phillips, Abby Southwick, and the other women delegates. Wendell Phillips, urged on by his wife ("Wendell, don't shilly-shally"), protested this action, but to no avail. Elizabeth Stanton found the clerical portion of the convention most violent in opposing the seating of the women. "The clergymen," she wrote, "seemed to have God and his angels especially in their care and keeping, and were in agony lest the women should do or say something to shock the heavenly hosts. Their all-sustaining conceit gave them abundant assurance that their movements must necessarily be all-pleasing to the celestials whose ears were open to the proceedings of the World's Convention. Deborah, Hulda, Vashti, and Esther might have questioned the propriety of calling it a World's Convention, when only half of humanity was represented there; but what were their opinions worth compared with those of Rev. A. Harvey, the Rev. C. Stout, or the Rev. J. Burnet, who, Bible in hand, argued woman's subjection, divinely decreed when Eve was created."

So the women were forced to sit in the gallery, "in a low-curtained seat like a church choir, and modestly listened to the French, British and American Solons for twelve of the longest days in June. . . ." And they were voluntarily joined there by the indignantly protesting William Lloyd Garrison,

the Negro Abolitionist Charles Lenox Remond, and other male delegates.

At the Queen Street lodging where many of the American delegates were staying, arguments were so bitter that James Birney had to pack his valise and seek new quarters. The women were stung by this whole experience into new thought and action. "As Mrs. Mott and I walked away arm in arm, commenting on the incidents of the day, we resolved to hold a convention as soon as we returned home, and form a society to advocate the rights of women. . . . The acquaintance of Lucretia Mott, who was a broad, liberal thinker on politics, religion, and all questions of reform, opened to me a new world of thought."

An eventful honeymoon! Upon her return, Mrs. Stanton conducted classes for Negro children in Johnstown, where "like a defiant hen" she had to protect her brood against insult and harm from some of the upright churchgoers in the community. In 1843 the Stantons moved to Boston, where Henry practiced law and Elizabeth made the acquaintance of Abolitionists like Lydia Maria Child, Elizabeth Peabody, Maria Chapman, as well as Whittier and Theodore Parker. She attended the annual conventions of the Anti-Slavery Society and was active in its affairs.

Then the family moved in 1846 to Seneca Falls, New York, where they were to live for the next sixteen years. The "magnetic circle" of reformers in this area included Frederick Douglass at Rochester, Samuel J. May at Syracuse, Gerrit Smith at Peterboro, and Beriah Green at Whitesboro. And it was in the Methodist Church of Seneca Falls that the famous Woman's Rights Convention of July 19-20, 1848, took place. The call for the convention was written by Mrs. Stanton and Mrs. Mott. The delegates adopted a Declaration of Sentiments, patterned after the Declaration of Independence. The most controversial plank, prepared by Mrs. Stanton, read: "Resolved, that it is the duty of the women of this country to

secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise." With the help of Frederick Douglass, the hotly debated resolution was finally passed by a small majority.

Mrs. Stanton's main work from then on was as an advocate of woman's rights rather than as an Abolitionist. During the Civil War, however, she again came forward as a leader in the fight for Negro emancipation. She was elected president of the Women's National Loyalty League, an organization formed in 1863 "to give support to the government in so far as it makes a war for freedom." The main speakers at the organizing convention included Elizabeth Stanton, Lucy Stone, Angelina Grimké Weld, and Ernestine L. Rose. Susan B. Anthony was elected secretary. By August 1864, the League secured 400,000 signatures for a petition to enact a Constitutional Amendment abolishing slavery. A majority of Congress was obtained for this the following year.

# FRANCES E. W. HARPER

"SHE HAS A NOBLE HEAD, this bronze muse; a strong face with a shadowed glow upon it." The bronze muse, so described by her contemporary Grace Greenwood, was Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, the most popular Negro poet in mid-19th century America. Her *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects,* first published in 1854, went through several editions. The introduction by William Lloyd Garrison spoke warmly of this young woman with the clear, melodious voice that fired antislavery audiences from New Bedford to Detroit. "She is such a good and glorious speaker that we are all charmed with her," wrote Rev. J. W. Loguen, the heroic fugitive slave who became a leader of the Underground Railroad.

Frances Watkins was herself born of free parents in Baltimore, in 1825. She attended a little school run by her uncle, went to work at 13, got a job in a bookstore where she made good use of the stock. In 1850 she left Maryland for Ohio. For a time she taught at Union Seminary near Columbus. Then she came to Little York, Pennsylvania, in 1853, and there worked with the Underground Railroad. Rapidly winning fame for her oratorical powers, she was engaged in 1854 as a permanent lecturer by the Anti-Slavery Society of Maine.

Her first book of verse was published that year. In 1860 she married Fenton Harper in Cincinnati.

Few women in the Abolitionist movement travelled so widely or spoke to so many audiences. In a typical letter to a friend, she wrote from Niagara Falls in 1856: "I have just returned from Canada today. I gave one lecture at Toronto, which was well attended.—Well, I have gazed for the first time on Free Land!" Tears sprang to her eyes, she reported. Whatever a slave was in the South, or for that matter, in the shadow of Bunker Hill Monument, here he became "a man and a brother." From Syracuse, J. W. Loguen writes to William Still: "Miss F. E. Watkins left our house yesterday for Ithaca, and other places in that part of the State." From Detroit, the Negro Abolitionist William C. Nell writes to Garrison about a crowded meeting of Negroes in the Croghan Street Baptist Church where "Miss Watkins, in the course of one of her very best outbursts of eloquent indignation" protested the kidnapping of two fugitive slaves living in Detroit.

Her poems, written with ballad simplicity, are charged with the powerful emotions of the liberation struggle. In "The Slave Mother," "The Slave Auction," "The Fugitive's Wife," she poignantly evokes the images of cruel suffering. But if she could move the reader to weep over the horrors of slavery, she could also exalt, as in her poem "A Mother's Heroism," based on the remark of Elijah P. Lovejoy's mother when she learned that her son had been killed by a pro-slavery mob at Alton, Illinois: "I had rather he should die so than desert his principles."

The poems are wrathful and proud at the same time. In "The Tennessee Hero," based upon an actual incident in 1856, she paid tribute to a slave who rather than betray his comrades, plotting their freedom, received 750 lashes and died:

> "I know the men who would be free
> They are the heroes of your land;

But death and torture I defy
Ere I betray that band."

And in "Ethiopia" the poet exclaims:

"Yes! Ethiopia yet shall stretch
Her bleeding hands abroad;
Her cry of agony shall reach
The burning throne of God. . . ."

In another poem, "Eliza Harris," Mrs. Harper movingly portrays the heroine of Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*:

"O, poverty, danger and death she can brave,
For the child of her love is no longer a slave!"

One of Mrs. Harper's finest poems, a work which surely merits inclusion in every anthology of American literature, is "Bury Me in a Free Land." It is printed here in full:

Make me a grave where'er you will,
In a lowly plain, or a lofty hill;
Make it among earth's humblest graves,
But not in a land where men are slaves.

I could not rest if around my grave
I heard the steps of a trembling slave;
His shadow above my silent tomb
Would make it a place of fearful gloom.

I could not rest if I heard the tread
Of a coffle gang to the shambles led,
And the mother's shriek of wild despair
Rise like a curse on the trembling air.

I could not sleep if I saw the lash
Drinking her blood at each fearful gash,
And I saw her babes torn from her breast
Like trembling doves from their parent nest.

I'd shudder and start if I heard the bay
Of bloodhounds seizing their human prey,
And I heard the captive plead in vain
As they bound afresh his galling chain.

If I saw young girls from their mother's arms
Bartered and sold for their youthful charms,
My eye would flash with a mournful flame,
My death-paled cheek grow red with shame.

I would sleep, dear friends, where bloated might
Can rob no man of his dearest right;
My rest shall be calm in any grave
Where none can call his brother a slave.

I ask no monument, proud and high,
To arrest the gaze of the passers-by;
All that my yearning spirit craves,
Is bury me not in a land of slaves.

With such verses, swift and direct in impact, did Mrs. Harper help rouse the country. Her prose was equally effective. One example is the article she wrote for the *Anglo-African* in 1859, taking issue with the belief of some professional and middle-class Negroes that salvation lay in adopting the views and customs of the rich. Mrs. Harper argued: "We need what money cannot buy and what affluence is too beggarly to purchase. . . . Let us not then defer all our noble opportunities till we get rich." Not, she made clear, that she was

aiming to enlist a crusade against the desire for riches. But she *was* opposed to chaining down the soul to the single idea of "getting money as stepping into power or even gaining our rights in common with others." "The important lesson we should learn and be able to teach," she concluded, "is how to make every gift, whether gold or talent, fortune or genius, subserve the cause of crushed humanity and carry out the greatest idea of the present age, the glorious idea of human brotherhood."

One of the noblest tributes to John Brown and his valiant band imprisoned in Virginia came from the pen of Mrs. Harper. In a letter to Brown from Kendalville, Indiana, dated November 25, 1859, the poet wrote with prophetic ardor: "Dear Friend: Although the hands of Slavery throw a barrier between you and me, and it may not be my privilege to see you in your prison-house, Virginia has no bolts or bars through which I dread to send you my sympathy. In the name of the young girl sold from the warm clasp of a mother's arms to the clutches of a libertine or a profligate—in the name of the slave mother, her heart rocked to and fro by the agony of her mournful separations—I thank you, that you have been brave enough to reach out your hands to the crushed and blighted of my race.

"You have rocked the bloody Bastille; and I hope that from your sad fate great good may arise to the cause of freedom. Already from your prison has come a shout of triumph against the giant sin of our country. The hemlock is distilled with victory when it is pressed to the lips of Socrates. The Cross becomes a glorious ensign when Calvary's pain-browned suffered yields up his life upon it. And if Universal Freedom is ever to be the dominant power of the land, your bodies may be only her first stepping stones to dominion. . . ."

Mrs. Harper told John Brown that she had written to his wife and sent her a few dollars. She pledged to continue this assistance. Urging Brown to let her know if any of his fellow-

prisoners had a wife or children who needed help, she signed herself "Yours in the cause of freedom."

To freedom's cause Frances Ellen Watkins Harper continued her rich contribution until her death in 1911.

# HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

SOON AFTER the Fugitive Slave Act was passed in 1850, Harriet Beecher Stowe received a letter from her sister-in-law in Boston, Mrs. Edward Beecher. "Hattie," said the letter, "if I could use a pen as you can, I would write something that will make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is." Mrs. Stowe read this to her children, and they recalled years later that their mother, then a woman of thirty-nine who had suffered much illness and poverty, crumpled the letter, rose to her feet, and said quietly: "I *will* write something. I will if I live."

But writing a book was no simple matter for a mother of six children, who had to make ends meet on Calvin Stowe's salary as a professor of Natural and Revealed Religion at Bowdoin College. There was an infant to nurse—"as long as the baby sleeps with me sights I can't do much at anything." There were chowders and pies to prepare in the rented house on Federal Street in Brunswick, Maine. And to stitch out the family income, Mrs. Stowe had to turn out short journalistic pieces.

Yet the book would not be downed. Life kept pressing home the horrors of the slave system which Harriet Stowe

thought she was leaving behind when the family moved up from Cincinnati. For eighteen years she had lived in the "Queen City of the West," where her clergyman father, Lyman Beecher, headed the Lane Theological Seminary, and where her sister Catherine founded the Western Female Institute. In Cincinnati, divided only by the Ohio River from slave territory, the religious New England girl had helped her brother Henry Ward Beecher, a loaded revolver at his elbow, edit a journal which Southern postmasters refused to handle.

During these years she had seen organized pro-slavery mobs, "composed in the main of young men of the better class," wreck the printing plant of Abolitionist James Birney's *Philanthropist*. She had witnessed the sacking of alley-shacks in the Negro ghetto of Cincinnati, the brutal capture of slaves who had escaped across the frozen Ohio. Her own home was a haven for fugitives, and she had helped a young Negro woman in her employ slip away from a former "master" who was on her trail.

When Mrs. Stowe, a peace-seeking woman, returned North in 1850, she found that there was no refuge from the national crime. With the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act that year, failure to join in hunting down Negroes, failure to be an active accomplice in slavery, was pronounced treason. In this treason every man and woman of conscience wholeheartedly joined. Mrs. Stowe was deeply shocked by the seizure in Boston of fugitives like Shadrach and Thomas Sims. She approved the wrathful sermons preached on this question by her brother, Dr. Edward Beecher, who had been in Illinois with the Abolitionist martyr Elijah P. Lovejoy.

And now, resolved to write her novel, she wrote to Dr. Gamaliel Bailey, editor of the anti-slavery *National Era* in Washington:

"Up to this year I have always felt that I had no particular call to meddle with this subject, and I dreaded to expose even my own mind to the full force of its exciting power. But

I feel now that the time is come when even a woman or a child who can speak a word for freedom and humanity is bound to speak. The Carthaginian women in the last peril of their state cut off their hair for bow-strings to give to the defenders of their country and such peril and shame as now hangs over this country is worse than Roman slavery, and I hope every woman who can write will not be silent. . . ."

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* began to appear in the *National Era* in June, 1851. It was originally conceived as a serial of three or four sketches. But the subject would not let go, and neither would the readers of the *National Era,* who begged the author to continue and protested vehemently when the paper missed an installment. And continue it did until nearly a year passed and there were forty sections, for which the author was paid the sum initially contracted for—$300.

Finding a publisher for the book was no simple matter. A large Boston firm turned it down: it could never sell a thousand copies, they said, and besides, success would be even worse than failure for it would "ruin our business in the South." Fortunately, a Boston woman, Mrs. John P. Jewett, had been deeply moved by the story, and she induced her husband, who headed a small publishing house specializing in "practical books," to gamble on a novel. Mr. Jewett became all the more alarmed when it became apparent the story was growing too long for a one-volume work; but Harriet Stowe assured him that she did not make the story, the story made itself.

The two-volume work entitled *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly* was published on March 20, 1852. No reviews appeared for weeks, but reviews were hardly necessary. A miracle had taken place. Ten thousand copies were gone in a few days, and by the end of a year over 300,000 copies were sold in this country alone—the equivalent of four million today. As Mrs. Stowe said, writing of herself in the third person: "The indignation, the pity, the distress, that had

long weighed upon her soul seemed to pass off from her, and into the readers of the book." A score of songs based on the novel, including Whittier's "Little Eva," became sensational hits. A card game called "Uncle Tom and Little Eva," dramatizing "the continual separation and reunion of families," swept the country. The first of countless stage versions opened in September a 100-night run in Troy, New York.

No American book had ever made such an impact abroad. "This book is in all hands and in all journals," wrote George Sand; "people devour it, they cover it with tears." Translated into many languages, it was hailed by writers the world over —Heine, Dickens, Macaulay, George Sand, the young Tolstoy. The Russian translation of 1853 was greeted by the leading revolutionary democrats as an aid in their own struggle against serfdom—Chernyshevsky, in his novel, *What Is To Be Done?* has the young women in a co-operative sewing establishment inquire about "the life of Mrs. Beecher Stowe whose novel we have all known." From London, the Negro Abolitionist, William Wells Brown, wrote in 1853 that when Mrs. Stowe appeared at an overflow meeting of 5,000 at Exeter Hall, "there was a degree of excitement in the room that can better be imagined than described. The waving of hats and handkerchiefs, the clapping of hands, the stamping of feet, and the screaming and fainting of ladies, went on as if it had been in the program. . . ."

Such enthusiasm abroad alarmed the pro-slavery administration of Franklin Pierce, and Ambassador James Buchanan was assigned to prevent if possible a reception of Mrs. Stowe by Queen Victoria. At home, meanwhile, the first blast came from a Northern paper representing the big cotton investors, the New York *Journal of Commerce*. "A criminal prostitution!" cried the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Laws were passed in the South banning possession of the novel. A Mobile, Alabama, bookseller was run out of town for stocking it, and a free Negro of Maryland named Samuel Green drew a ten-

year prison sentence for owning it. The author herself got threatening letters, and one day there arrived at her home a package containing an ear cut off from the head of a Negro. Southern white children were taught to chant

"Go, go, go,
Ol' Harriet Beecher Stowe."

The Abolitionists were quick to welcome *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a mighty weapon for emancipation. Frederick Douglass, to whom Mrs. Stowe had gone for material about life on a cotton plantation, told the readers of his paper that the novelist had "unfolded the secrets of the slave's lacerated heart." The Negro leader vividly summed up the impact of the novel:

"One flash from the heart-supplied intellect of Harriet Beecher Stowe could light a million camp fires in front of the embattled hosts of slavery, which not all the waters of the Mississippi, mingled as they are with blood, could extinguish. The present will be looked to by after-coming generations as the age of anti-slavery literature—when supply on the gallop could not keep pace with the ever growing demand—when a picture of a Negro on the cover was a help to the sale of a book."

"There is no arguing with *pictures,*" Mrs. Stowe believed, and in her novel she painted scenes that evoke the heartbreak of families split up by the Simon Legrees, the unbearable anguish of mothers whose babies are snatched from them on the auction block. One of the most memorable is the scene on the steamboat *La Belle Riviere,* with its fashionable white folk sunning themselves on the top deck while on the freight deck below the young Negro mother Lucy, tormented beyond human endurance, hurls herself into the river to escape "into a state which *never will* give up a fugitive—not even at the demand of the whole glorious Union." In the better-known scene of Eliza Harris' crossing the ice with her son Henry, the

author speaks directly to her white woman readers: "If it were *your* Harry, mother, or your Willie, that were going to be torn from you by a brutal trader, tomorrow morning—if you had seen the man, and heard that the papers were signed and delivered, and you had only from twelve o'clock till morning to make good *your* escape—how fast could *you* walk?" Again and again the novelist sets up this dramatic identification between the reader and the oppressed people for whose freedom this book was fighting.

And repeatedly, as in the portrait of George Harris, she refutes the slaveholders' stock-in-trade argument of the Negro's "inferiority." Harris, who had seen his mother put up at a sheriff's sale with her seven children, is sent by his owner to work in a bagging factory, where he invents a machine for the cleaning of hemp. George Harris "talked so fluently, held himself so erect, looked so handsome and manly, that his master began to feel an uneasy consciousness of inferiority. What business had his slave to be marching round the country, inventing machines, and holding up his head among gentlemen? He'd soon put a stop to it." But Harris refuses to go back to the field. "I'm a better man than he is," he says to his wife. "I won't be taken, Eliza; I'll die first; I'll be free, or I'll die. . . . I'll fight for my liberty to the last breath I breathe." And fight he does, with arms, side by side with white Abolitionists in Ohio, until he and his family are free.

The "keen and quiet wit" which Douglass praised in the novel asserts itself delightfully throughout. George Harris' owner tells another white man: "It's a free country, sir; the man's *mine*, and I do what I please with him—that's it." St. Clare's slaveholding father venerated God "as decidedly the head of the upper classes." Marie St. Clare complains about the "obstinacy" of the Negro woman whom she had separated from her husband and children: "She won't marry anybody else; and I do believe, now, though she knows how necessary she is to me, and how feeble my health is, she would go back

to her husband tomorrow, if she only could. I *do* indeed; they are just so selfish, now, the best of them." Another character shrewdly observes, concerning the argument that the Bible sanctions slavery: "Well, suppose that something should bring down the price of cotton once and forever, and make the whole slavery property a drug on the market, don't you think we should soon have another version of the Scripture doctrine? What a flood of light would pour into the church, all at once, and how immediately it would be discovered that everything in the Bible and reason went the other way!"

These knife-thrusts cut deep into the hypocrisies of the system. Mrs. Stowe documented her indictment in 1853 with *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin.* With the same literary power she went on to write another anti-slavery novel, *Dred,* published in 1856. Based in part on the famous slave insurrection led by Nat Turner, this novel reflected the increasing militancy of Mrs. Stowe's views. And she was to advance the struggle still further during the Civil War, when she devoted her newspaper column to pressuring the government for emancipation of all the slaves. When Mrs. Stowe visited Abraham Lincoln in Washington, the President warmly greeted her: "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war!" It was an exaggeration, but an understandable one.

# SARAH P. REMOND

THE INDIGNITIES heaped on white women Abolitionists were compounded for their Negro sisters, who daily braved abuse both as Negroes and as women. One day in 1853, Sarah P. Remond and two of her friends bought tickets for the Howard Athenaeum, a lecture hall in New York. They entered the hall and were seated. When the manager noticed the Negro woman, he stormed over, forced her out of her seat, and then pushed her down the stairs. No doubt the bully thought that ended matters. He was mistaken. Miss Remond immediately sued the management and won an important opinion from a Justice Russell upholding her rights. Her assailant was fined and compelled to pay costs. And from then on there was never any question about excluding Miss Remond from the Howard Athenaeum.

Born a free Negro in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1815, Sarah Parker Remond devoted her life to seeing to it that all her people were free. Her grandfather, on her mother's side, fought in the Revolutionary War. Her father, a hairdresser in Salem, migrated to this country at an early age from the West Indies and was naturalized as a citizen of the United States in 1811. These were facts of a time "when a better spirit per-

vaded the land, and when the patriotic services of colored men in the defense of the country were fresh in the minds of the people." So commented Sarah's brother Charles Lenox Remond in 1857, during a meeting of Negroes in Philadelphia to protest the Dred Scott decision which denied the citizenship of the Negro and asserted that he had "no rights which white men are bound to respect."

Sarah and Charles Remond—the brother was older by five years—were both educated in the public schools of Salem, which enrolled Negro students much earlier than most other American cities. Charles Remond was to become an outstanding leader and orator of the Abolitionist movement, a close co-worker of Douglass and Garrison. Sarah Remond, too, was an ardent anti-slavery organizer and a strikingly effective speaker. She accompanied her brother on many campaigns, lecturing at first mainly in the West. During 1856 she was active in the New York State campaign of the American Anti-Slavery Society, sharing the platform with all the leading Abolitionists. On this tour "the hotels and boarding houses which admitted Susan B. Anthony refused to accommodate Sarah and Charles Remond," as her biographer, Dorothy Porter, notes.

In a letter dated September 18, 1858, Sarah Remond describes another campaign, this time on Cape Cod, with her brother Charles and the white Abolitionist Parker Pillsbury. "On Sunday," she writes of one meeting (there were eight in all), "although we had a large hall, many were obliged to go away unable to obtain entrance. I never looked upon a more closely packed audience."

With her skill and experience, it was natural that she should be urged to visit England in behalf of the Abolitionist cause. The importance of winning foreign support, politically, morally, financially, was well understood by the movement. On trips abroad, Negro speakers like Douglass, William Wells Brown and Charles L. Remond were particularly effective. In

1841 Remond returned from Ireland with an "Address of the Irish People to their Countrymen and Countrywomen in America" urging Irish-Americans to treat Negroes as equals and brothers, and to unite with the Abolitionists. The appeal had 60,000 signatures—10,000 more were soon added—headed by the Irish leader Daniel O'Connell.

In keeping with this tradition, Sarah Remond sailed for London late in 1858. She had prepared for this visit by sending a letter, published in the *Anti-Slavery Advocate* of London, noting that strong efforts were being made by the slaveholders and their allies, following the Dred Scott decision, to legalize the slave trade. "Only think of it," she wrote, "in the nineteenth century, a nation which years ago declared the slave trade piracy, and at this time is making greater professions in favor of liberty and Christianity than any other nation in the world, endeavoring to legalize traffic in bodies and souls of men and women who are 'made for little lower than angels.' Is it not enough to make one's heart sick?" She added: "When I began to write to you, I did not intend to write so much about the cause I feel so much interest in, but you know 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.'"

Miss Remond lectured in England, Ireland and Scotland during 1859 and 1860. She was greeted warmly wherever she spoke. The newspapers praised her "broad, comprehensive, impressive" talks, and prominent Englishmen came to visit her. In one small town her Abolitionist address was signed by the Mayor, the parish rector, the Member of Parliament for the borough, and 3,522 residents, who raised a fund for the American Anti-Slavery Society. Always she kept in mind her purpose to secure "public addresses from the English to the American people, especially from the English to the American churches, enunciating true Christian anti-slavery principles and feelings of sympathy with the Abolitionists there in their patriotic and philanthropic labors."

An infallible sign of her success was the refusal of the

United States Embassy in London to give her a visa for France. Miss Remond was told that colored people are not citizens and therefore not entitled to such privileges—an argument used to keep passports from many other Negroes of the time. As in the Howard Athenaeum six years earlier, Sarah Remond protested and the embassy officials threatened to remove her forcibly from the office. When she got back to her lodgings, she penned a letter to the American Ambassador. He replied that to approve a visa for her was a "manifest impossibility by law." Why this should be manifest to anybody but a slave-trader he did not bother to explain. Sarah Remond nevertheless went to France, on a passport which she obtained from the British foreign secretary.

During the Civil War, she came again to London and appealed for British moral support of the Negro's cause. In an address delivered in 1862 she showed how the material well-being of Englishmen was tied up with the ending of the slave system. She spoke not only to the manufacturers but to the workers of England. At a time "when starvation threatens thousands" in Britain, "it is well that the only remedy which can produce desirable and lasting prosperity should receive the moral support of every class—*emancipation.*" And she concluded: "Let no diplomacy of statesmen, no intimidation of slaveholders, no scarcity of cotton, no fear of slave insurrections, prevent the people of Great Britain from maintaining their position as the friend of the oppressed Negro, which they deservedly occupied previous to the disastrous civil war." Thus, Sarah P. Remond made an important contribution to arousing that public opinion in England which kept the Tories from intervening on the side of the Confederacy, a decisive issue in the war.

Some years after the war, in 1871, this remarkable woman obtained a medical degree in Florence, Italy, where she continued to live as a physician. The long arm of chauvinism reached even here. When the Quaker Abolitionist, Mrs. Eliz-

abeth Buffum Chace, visited Florence in 1873, she was told by Dr. Remond that Americans had tried to ruin her professionally and socially "by bringing their hateful prejudices" to Italy. But nothing they could do or say was ever to crush the freedom fighter who had, in the face of every obstacle, wrought so nobly for her people and her country.

# ERNESTINE L. ROSE

A JEWISH WOMAN of Polish birth, Ernestine Louise Rose was twenty-six years old when she came to this country in 1836. She would never forget her deep emotions on first witnessing an Independence Day celebration. The sun seemed to shine brighter and "Everything in nature seemed transformed from deformity to beauty," as she told an Abolitionist gathering years later. But the realities of American life, she soon learned, were not in harmony with the truths of the Declaration of Independence. "For, in spite of that Declaration—in sadness and sorrow do I say it—the United States of America are guilty of outrage and recreancy to their own principles in retaining slavery."

For over thirty years Mrs. Rose remained in America, and much of this time she devoted to battling the outrage of racist oppression. Once, around 1847, she was down in Columbia, South Carolina, where she riled a Southern gentleman with her anti-slavery talk. He said: "You should thank your stars for being a woman." "I always thank my stars for being a woman," she replied, "but why in this particular instance?" The gentleman enlightened her: "Our State has made provisions for many cases, but not for all. For instance—when we

catch a good Abolitionist, we give him a coat of tar and feathers." "*I* am an Abolitionist in the fullest sense of the word," said Ernestine Rose, "and be I a woman or not, you are so exceedingly lazy and inactive here that it would be an act of charity to give you something to do, were it even to give me a coat of tar and feathers." The feelings of the enraged slaveholder were not soothed when Mrs. Rose added: "I tell you, sir, that if I had never been an Abolitionist before, I would have become one here, and you would have helped to make me one."

Such boldness typified this lovely woman who described herself to one audience as "a daughter of poor, crushed Poland, and the down-trodden and persecuted people called the Jews, 'a child of Israel. . . .'" She was born Ernestine Louise Süsmondi Potowski on January 13, 1810, the daughter of a Rabbi in Piotrkow, Poland. Showing her independence early, she broke with the religious discipline of her home and left at the age of seventeen to study in Berlin, where she spent two years. After a period of travel in several European countries, she came to England in 1832. Here she became a Utopian Socialist under the intellectual influence of Robert Owen, who preached a New Moral Order in opposition to the established churches and religions. In a civil ceremony she married Owenite William Ella Rose, a non-Jewish watchmaker, with whom she came to New York in the spring of 1836.

In this country Mrs. Rose continued her work for various social reforms, especially woman's rights. A forerunner of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, with whom she was to work closely in later years, she agitated for laws enabling women to inherit their husbands' property. An alert, persuasive speaker, she soon became known as the "Queen of the Platform." Active in all the national woman's rights conventions as well as in the anti-slavery campaigns, she was "far before any woman speaker I ever heard," thought Sallie Holley, an Abolitionist leader of Rochester, New York. Mrs.

Holley gives an interesting image in one of her letters: "Ernestine L. Rose is a charming woman and at times playful. After a talk I had with her about a future life, which she does not believe in, I said: But I think I shall meet you in a life beyond and above this. She said: Then you will say to me, 'I told you so,' and I shall reply, 'How very stupid I was.' "

Ernestine Rose's unorthodox views on religion, combined with her opinions on slavery and woman's rights, made her a favorite target of the conservatives, and Sallie Holley did not exaggerate in referring to her as "one of the worst-abused women of her time." The New York *Herald* lampooned the foreign accent of this "Polish female." When Police Captain Isaiah Rynders and his gang of Tammany toughs mobbed anti-slavery meetings in New York during 1850, they took special delight in molesting Mrs. Rose, along with Douglass and Garrison. In 1854, the Albany *Daily State Register* was sickened to report that committees of the New York State legislature "have sat for hours, grave and solemn as owls, listening to the outpourings of fanaticism and folly of this Polish propagandist . . . the ringleted, glove-handed exotic, Ernestine L. Rose."

Undeterred by such abuse, defying the "poisonous rancor and prejudice" of anti-Semitism, Mrs. Rose spoke in state after state. Her bravery and eloquence drew the applause of William Cullen Bryant in the New York *Evening Post* and Horace Greeley in the *Tribune*. In the pages of *The Liberator*, Garrison printed the speeches of "one of the most remarkable women, and one of the ablest and most eloquent public speakers, in this country."

One speech published by Garrison was delivered on August 4, 1853, to an audience of over 500 Negro and white men and women at a picnic grove in Flushing, Long Island. The meeting was called by the New York City Anti-Slavery Society to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of West Indian emancipation. A good part of the audience had come from

New York via the steamer *Island City*. Because of rain, the meeting had to convene in a large barn. The invocation was by a Negro minister, Rev. Campbell, and there were songs by a Negro choir. The speakers included Garrison and two Negro Abolitionists, V. W. Wilkins and Thomas Van Renssalaer.

The speech by Ernestine L. Rose was frequently interrupted by applause as she hit out at bigotry and hypocrisy. She demolished the slaveholders' key argument of the "inferiority" of the Negro: "But the great act of the emancipation of 800,000 human beings [in the British West Indies] has shown to the world that the African race are not only capable of taking care of themselves, but are capable of enjoying peacefully as much liberty and as much freedom as the white men." She drew a vivid picture of what it means to be a slave: "We have the evil among us, we see it daily and hourly before us; we have become accustomed to it; we talk about it; but do we comprehend it;—do we realize it—do we feel it? What is it to be a slave? Not to be your own, bodily, mentally, morally—that is to be a slave."

"Ay," she went on, "even if slaveholders treated their slaves with the utmost kindness and charity; if I were told they kept them sitting on a sofa all day, and fed them with the best of the land, it is none the less slavery—(applause); for what does slavery mean? To work hard, to fare ill, to suffer hardship, that is not slavery; for many of us white men and women have to work hard, have to fare ill, have to suffer hardship, and yet we are not slaves. Slavery is, not to belong to yourself—to be robbed of yourself. There is nothing that I so much abhor as that single thing—to be robbed of one's self. We are our own legitimate masters. Nature has not created masters and slaves. . . . I go for emancipation of all kinds—white and black, man and woman . . . there should be no slaves of any kind among them. There are ties that bind man to man far stronger than the ties of nation—than the political and commercial ties—ay, even stronger than the ties of relationship; and these are the

ties of humanity." To the claim of the slaveholders that civilization was threatened by the attack on their system, she replied: "The only civilization you have exists among the slaves; for if industry and the mechanical arts are the great criterion of civilization (and I believe they are), then certainly the slaves are the only civilized ones among you, because they do all the work."

With such passion and power did Ernestine L. Rose fight the slave system, and she continued through the Civil War, during which she pressed for speedy emancipation. In 1869 she went back to England, where she died in 1892 at the age of 83. In an oration at her grave, Mrs. Rose's friend, Jacob Holyoake, leader of the English cooperative movement, declared: "The slaves she had helped to free from the bondage of ownership, and the minds she had set free from the bondage of authority, were the glad and proud remembrances of her last days." She had been faithful to the best in her heritage, this noble daughter of "the down-trodden and persecuted people called the Jews."

# JANE SWISSHELM

PITTSBURGH WAS A TOWN of less than five thousand when Jane Swisshelm was born there in 1815, the daughter of Scotch-Irish Presbyterian settlers. The frontier life of western Pennsylvania shaped her mind, and she spoke in a blunt, peppery way that would always mark her as somehow different from Abolitionist women brought up in older centers like Boston and Philadelphia. "My style I caught from the crude, rural surroundings, and was familiar to the unlearned," Mrs. Swisshelm noted in her colorful autobiography, *Half a Century*, published in 1880. And she was unfailingly the pioneer, whether as anti-slavery publisher in Pittsburgh and then in St. Cloud, Minnesota, or as Washington correspondent for Horace Greeley's *Tribune* battling her way to admission in the Senate press gallery ("It has established woman's right to sit as a reporter in our legislative halls," she wrote her New York editor. "I should not have thought of it, if they had not made me angry, and I do really believe, Mr. Greeley, that it is a sin to be good-tempered").

Good-tempered she could never be in the face of the injus-

tice and stupidity from which she had suffered more than her share. Life was hard from the start. As a child, Jane Grey Cannon had to help her widowed mother earn a living, and she was only fourteen when she began to teach in the public school of a Pittsburgh suburb. At 21 she married James Swisshelm, with whom her life was to be a long misery until their separation twenty years later. She was a talented artist, but having been taught that "A man does not marry an artist, but a housekeeper," she put her brushes away, crucified her gift, "and while it hung writhing on the cross, spent my best years and powers cooking cabbage." She left us only one painting, a self-portrait done around 1837, which strikingly testifies to her skill. In later life she could never enter an art gallery without bowing her head in bitter repentance.

Mrs. Swisshelm's anti-slavery feelings were inflamed during a visit in 1838 to Louisville, Kentucky, where her husband planned to go into business. It was here that she first saw "the advance guard of a great army of women whippers." She would never forget the image of a ten-year-old Negro boy who for months wore an iron collar and a hoop over his head to prevent his running away again: "The master, who thus secured his property, was the Elder in the Second Presbyterian Church, and led the choir." She would always remember the lady of the Fourth Street Methodist Church who nailed her cook to a fence by the ear with a ten-penny nail, an act which the minister disapproved because he thought it might hurt the church. In Louisville, too, she listened to the complaint of a mistress in satin who had been compelled to send her aged cook, rheumatic and nearly blind, to the workhouse "and have her whipped by the constable; and that cost fifty cents; but really, this martyr and her husband had grown weary of whipping Martha. One hated so to send a servant to the public whipping-post; it looked like cruelty—did cruelly lacerate the feelings of refined people, and it was so ungrate-

ful of Martha, and all the rest of them, to torture this fine lady in this rough way."

"I promised the Lord then and there," said Jane Swisshelm, "that for life, it should be my work to bring 'deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.'" Faithful to her vow, she opened a school for Negro children in the Louisville home of a free Negro. But the black-vested gentlemen whose only implement of toil was the pistol and the whip threatened to burn down the house, and the school had to be given up. After a time, Mrs. Swisshelm returned North, taught for a couple of years, and then began to write for anti-slavery papers, including the Pittsburgh *Spirit of Liberty*.

When this paper was forced to suspend, Mrs. Swisshelm made up her mind that Pittsburgh must have an anti-slavery publication, so she started one of her own. It was called the *Saturday Visiter* (spelled that way on the authority of Dr. Samuel Johnson, she said), and the first number appeared at the end of 1847. This lively six-column weekly was "quite an insignificant looking sheet," wrote Jane Swisshelm, "but no sooner did the American eagle catch sight of it, than he swooned and fell off his perch. Democratic roosters straightened out their necks and ran screaming with terror. Whig 'coons scampered up trees and barked furiously. . . . A woman had started a political paper! A woman!" The editor was ridiculed, but this did not keep her from getting the paper around to every state in the Union, and the circulation rose to six thousand. Larger publications, North and South, were soon devoting their columns to fending her hard-hitting blows.

What riled them was not only that she was a woman and an Abolitionist, but that she was so effectively scourging the Mexican War then in progress. "This great nation," she hammered away, "is engaged in the pusillanimous work of beating poor little Mexico—the blood of women and children slain at

their own altars, on their own hearthstones, that you might spread the glorious institution of woman-whipping and baby-stealing." Her articles were always direct, concrete. Naming names, she was constantly involved in a swirl of libel suits. But she could more than hold her own. When George D. Prentice, pro-slavery editor of the Louisville *Courier,* angrily attacked her for being "a man all but the pantaloons," Jane Swisshelm replied:

*"Perhaps you have been busy*
*Horsewhipping Sal or Lizzie*
*Stealing some poor man's baby,*
*Selling its mother, maybe.*
*You say—and you are witty—*
*That I—and, 'tis a pity—*
*Of manhood lack but dress;*
*But you lack manliness,*
*A body clean and new,*
*A soul within it, too.*
*Nature must change her plan*
*Ere you can be a man."*

No wonder Prentice was advised by a fellow editor, in words that became widely quoted: "Brother George, beware of sister Jane."

In 1850 she went to Washington, and from there wrote the columns which Greeley featured in the *Tribune* under the heading "Letter from Mrs. Swisshelm." The correspondence was written with characteristic verve and individuality. Reporting the Senate debate on the Fugitive Slave Law, Mrs. Swisshelm writes: "They keep such a dingdong about 'supporting the Constitution.' One might imagine it was some miserable, decrepit old creature that was no longer able to totter on crutches but must be held up on every side, and dragged

along like a drunken loafer, on his road to the lock-up." She blasted Daniel Webster for supporting the Fugitive Slave Act. She excitedly described her triumph over those who would keep her from the press gallery.

Returning to Pittsburgh, where her paper was beginning to have serious financial problems, Jane Swisshelm continued her battle both as newspaperwoman and lecturer. She fought slavery "on the frontier plan of Indian warfare," she said, with every man the captain, corporals and privates of his own company. On the one hand, she could not join the Garrisonian wing of the Abolitionist movement because she differed with Garrison's narrow thesis that the Constitution was a pro-slavery document and that political action was fruitless. She held that the Constitution was an anti-slavery document which was being violated by the South. On the other hand, she did not feel she could work organizationally with the political-action wing of the movement because so many of its leaders had given notice that "no women need apply." As she put it: "Abolitionists were men of sharp angles. Organizing them was like binding crooked sticks in a bundle. . . ."

In 1857, before her divorce, Jane Swisshelm took her six-year-old daughter to St. Cloud, Minnesota, where her sister lived. And here she started a new Abolitionist paper, the St. Cloud *Visiter*. In doing so, she collided head-on with the "Minnesota Dictator," Adjutant General Sylvanus B. Lowry, a Democratic politician who "lived in semi-barbaric splendor, in an imposing house on the bank of the Mississippi, where he kept slaves, bringing them from and returning them to his Tennessee estate, at his convenience, and no man saying him nay." Lowry offered to finance a paper for Mrs. Swisshelm if she would support the Buchanan Administration. Her reply was an editorial wryly praising a presidency whose aim was "the entire subversion of Freedom and the planting of Slavery in every State and Territory, so that Toombs could realize his

boast, and call the roll of his slaves at the foot of Bunker Hill." This "support" understandably enraged General Lowry, who made every effort to suppress the paper he could not control. With two of his lieutenants he invaded Mrs. Swisshelm's office, destroyed her press, and left a note signed "Committee of Vigilance" which declared that the *Visiter* "is fit only for the inmates of Brothels, and you seem to have had some experience of the tastes of such persons."

This action did not sit well with many citizens of St. Cloud, even though most of them were Democrats and disagreed with the paper's policies. They called a mass meeting at which a vote was taken to buy a new press for the editor. Mrs. Swisshelm spoke at this meeting, but first she drew up her will, and then she spoke to "a Pennsylvania man, who had the reputation of being a dead shot, and had a pair of fine revolvers. He pledged himself solemnly to go with me and keep near me, and shoot me square through the brain, if there was no other way of preventing me falling alive into the hands of the mob." Happily, the mobsters were outnumbered by the liberty-loving citizens of St. Cloud.

The following year she was burned in effigy as "the mother of the Republican Party" by pro-slavery Democrats in the town. She again had an answer: "If you should take us, instead of a straw figure, and burn us we would talk to you all the time—talk to you, so that you would never cease to hear it the longest day of your lives." And talk she did, with singular force, on such subjects as "Woman and Politics" and "Slavery As I Have Seen It in a Slave State." Right through the war she carried on her agitation. She came to Washington and met Mr. Lincoln, who was too moderate, she thought at first, but whose sad, honest face she found "irresistible in its plea for confidence." Mrs. Lincoln was to become her close friend in the years ahead. In Washington, too, Jane Swisshelm served as a nurse and later as a clerk in the War Department,

one of the first women to serve in such a government capacity. Here again, as she wrote, she was on an "advance post on the picket line of civilization." None commanded that post more colorfully.

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